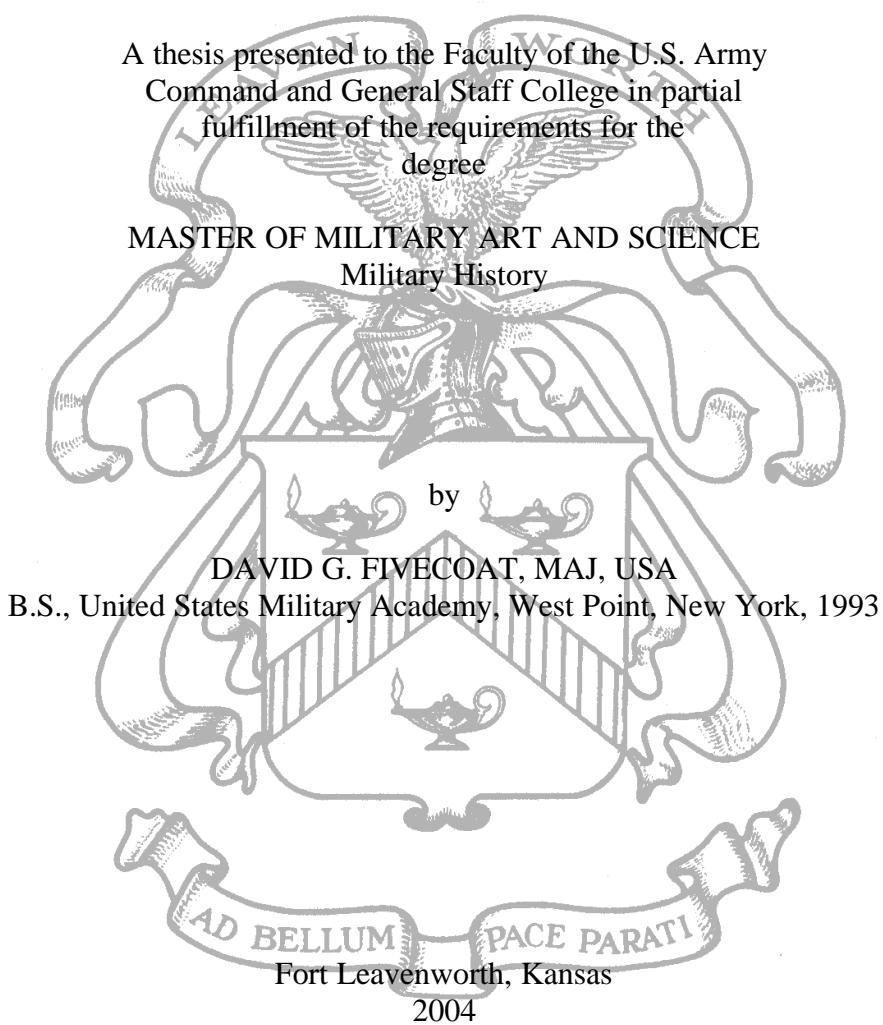


FINE CONDUCT UNDER FIRE:
THE TACTICAL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE 165TH INFANTRY REGIMENT
IN THE FIRST WORLD WAR



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MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE

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The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the student author and do not necessarily represent the views of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College or any other governmental agency. (References to this study should include the foregoing statement.)

ABSTRACT

FINE CONDUCT UNDER FIRE: THE TACTICAL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE 165th INFANTRY REGIMENT IN THE FIRST WORLD WAR, by David G. Fivecoat, 113 pages.

Recent historiography has almost universally denounced the tactical prowess of the American Expeditionary Force. However, a detailed analysis of the performance of the 42nd Division's 165th Infantry Regiment tells a surprisingly different story. Despite the challenges of the First World War battlefield, the 165th Infantry Regiment compiled a remarkable record of tactical effectiveness in its 180 days of combat. During its six campaigns, the regiment repeatedly held the line and seized objectives against veteran German units in a variety of situations and under various conditions. At the regimental level, a de facto adoption of trench warfare doctrine enabled the unit to synchronize the combined arms and avoid the doctrinal dysfunction that plagued the majority of the AEF. At the tactical level, the Irish platoons and companies rapidly became adept at using Indian-style or infiltration tactics to advance, seize terrain, and destroy German positions. In addition, superb leadership throughout the regiment and stellar unit cohesion played significant roles in the unit's superior tactical proficiency. In sum, these four factors enabled the 165th to achieve a level of tactical effectiveness second to none among the non-regular regiments of the AEF and equal to the best units within the German Army.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My year long saga of crafting “Fine Conduct Under Fire” would not have been possible without the help of scores of people who supported my research and writing. First and foremost I would like to thank Hallie Fivecoat, my wife, for her steadfast support, for her diligent proofreading, and for maintaining the facade that the tactical effectiveness of the 165th Infantry Regiment was an intriguing topic. Second, I’d like to thank my thesis committee--Mr. Stephenson, Dr. Challans, and LTC Clay--for their suggestions, prodding, proofreading, and patience. Third, I’d like to thank Rick Atkinson for his friendship, encouragement, and introductions to the Great War scholars Mac Coffman and Mitch Yockelson. Finally, I’d like to thank several archivists whose assistance improved my research immensely: Genoa Stanford at Fort Benning, Nan Card at the Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Center, Thomas M. Mooney at the University of Nebraska Archives and Special Collections, and the team at the Military History Institute. “Fine Conduct Under Fire” was certainly a team effort. In spite of all the help I received, all errors, misinterpretations, and conclusions are my own.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE THESIS APPROVAL PAGE	ii
ABSTRACT.....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	iv
ACRONYMS	vii
ILLUSTRATIONS	viii
CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER 2. THE FOUNDATION	15
Unit Cohesion	15
Leadership.....	20
Organization for Combat	26
Doctrinal Debate	33
Conclusion	35
CHAPTER 3. HOLDING THE LINE: IRISH DEFENSIVE OPERATIONS.....	40
Into the Line: Luneville	40
The Ancerville Education.....	45
Breaking the Assault: The St. Hilaire Defense	49
Conclusion	54
CHAPTER 4. A BEAUTIFUL WAR MACHINE: IRISH OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS	59
Crossing the Ourcq	59
St. Mihiel	68
St. Georges.....	75
Conclusion	83
CHAPTER 5. FINE CONDUCT UNDER FIRE.....	88
GLOSSARY	97
APPENDIX A. 42nd DIVISION TABLE OF ORGANIZATION.....	98
APPENDIX B. CHRONOLOGY AND CASUALTIES	99

APPENDIX C. MAP OF LUNEVILLE	100
APPENDIX D. MAP OF ANCERVILLE	101
APPENDIX E. MAP OF THE CHAMPAGNE DEFENSE	102
APPENDIX F. MAP OF THE OURCQ	103
APPENDIX G. MAP OF ST. MIHIEL	104
APPENDIX H. MAP OF ST. GEORGES	105
BIBLIOGRAPHY	106
INITIAL DISTRIBUTION LIST	112
CERTIFICATION FOR MMAS DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT	113

ACRONYMS

AEF	American Expeditionary Force
CR	Center of Resistance
<i>CdeG</i>	<i>Croix de Guerre</i>
DGDP	Directorate of Graduate Degree Programs
DSC	Distinguished Service Cross
DSM	Distinguished Service Medal
FA	Field Artillery
FAR	Field Artillery Regiment
GDP	Graduate Degree Programs
<i>GC</i>	<i>Groupe de Combat</i>
HE	High Explosive
IDR	Infantry Drill Regulations
IR	Infantry Regiment
LoH	Legion of Honor
MoH	Medal of Honor
NCO	Noncommissioned Officer
<i>PA</i>	<i>Posse d'Appui</i>
PC	Post of Command
US	United States
UA	Unit of Action

ILLUSTRATIONS

	Page
Figure 1. Elements of the 165th Infantry Regiment Advancing Using Indian-Style Tactics.....	8
Figure 2. Father Francis Duffy, the Wellspring of Regimental Strength.....	23
Figure 3. The Remarkable “Wild Bill” Donovan.....	24
Figure 4. Rainbow Soldiers Clearing a Village during the St. Mihiel Attack.....	72

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Paul Kennedy once commented that “the First World War is not a conflict which . . . is synonymous with military effectiveness.”¹ In fact, there is little in the recent historiography of the US Army’s role in the war to rebut this harsh assertion. The American Expeditionary Force (AEF), particularly at the tactical level, has been the criticized for its impotence by postwar scholars who routinely characterized it as “flatfooted and mindless in their attacks, tactically backward, and possessing little military imagination.”² On the surface, a dysfunctional tactical doctrine, an incoherent training strategy, and a chaotic personnel system seemed to create units across the AEF that performed inconsistently, failed to coordinate infantry and artillery in both the offense and defense, and lacked “tactical proficiency.”³ In addition, the doctrinal debate between General John J. Pershing’s concept of open warfare and the advocates of French and British trench warfare doctrine obscured an honest post-war assessment of the tactical effectiveness of units within the AEF.

However, a detailed look at the 165th Infantry Regiment’s tactical performance in over 180 days in the trenches tells a different tale--a story that includes the rapid absorption and modification of French doctrine; coordinated combined arms operations on the defense and the offense; and attacks across no man’s land that used fire and movement, employed cover and concealment, and overwhelmed German defenses. A veteran described one of the regiment’s late summer attacks as a case study in decentralized infantry tactics:

The battalion breaks up into companies as it gets nearer the front; and the companies, when they reach the point where they are likely to be under shell-fire, separate into platoons with considerable distance between them. In action, men advance with generous intervals between. When they get close to the enemy the advance is made by frequent rushes, about a fourth of the men in a platoon running forward, while their comrades keep the enemy's heads down by their fire, until all of them can get close. In its last stages the warfare of these small groups is more like Indian fighting. . . . To take machine gun nests--I am not speaking of regularly wired and entrenched positions, which is the business of artillery to reduce before the infantry essays them--it is often a matter of individual courage and strategy. . . . [O]ften the resistance is overcome . . . by some daring fellow who works his way across hollows which are barely deep enough to protect him from fire, or up a gully or watercourse, until he is near enough to throw hand grenades. Then it is all over.⁴

Despite the current conventional wisdom, this account hardly portrays a unit that is “flatfooted and mindless.”⁵ Time and again, the 165th Infantry Regiment conducted tactically effective combined arms defensive and offensive operations. Instrumental in the regiment’s string of tactical accomplishments was its superb cohesiveness, excellent leadership, and a special combination of Franco-American doctrine and Indian-style tactics.

Immediately after the armistice, a legion of writers lionized the AEF’s performance and contribution to the war effort. Championing that the AEF was a “powerful and smooth running machine,” General John J. Pershing’s contribution to the Superior Board, memoirs, and influence on the American Battlefield Monuments Commission’s series of books dominated the interwar scholarship on the AEF.⁶ Within the 42nd Division, Henry J. Reilly’s work *Americans All*, Leslie Langille’s memoir *Men of the Rainbow*, and Francis Duffy’s book *Father Duffy’s Story* generally echoed Pershing’s positive assessment, while providing constructive criticism of several operations.

However, scholars on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean soon began to discount the performance of the AEF. French and British scholars in the between wars period derided the effectiveness and contributions of American forces. American researchers, after the Second World War, have only been slightly more kind. Noted First World War scholar Timothy Nenninger states that “rigid plans of attack, lines of infantry advancing over open ground without regard to concealment or cover, little use of fire and maneuver, and improper employment of infantry supporting arms” were typical of AEF attacks in the late summer of 1918.⁷ Shockingly, James Rainey characterized the doughboy’s tactical performance as poor since they were successful during the Meuse-Argonne Offensive only because “the AEF smothered German machine guns with American flesh.”⁸ Finally, Todd Brereton grudgingly acknowledges that the “AEF progressed from an imperfect and unwieldy instrument to one of some sophistication, although bought at considerable cost.”⁹

Despite the rhetoric, few scholars have conducted a truly systematic examination of AEF doctrine, training, and combat operations at the regimental or division level. One of the few that has is Mark Grotelueschen. His superb book, *Doctrine Under Fire*, and his excellent dissertation, “The AEF Way of War,” inspect the 1st, 2nd, 26th, and 77th Division’s organization, training, leadership, and combat operations and finally provide a detailed picture, through the prism of the four divisions, on how the AEF actually trained, fought, and learned. He found that each division made rapid improvements, adjusted their doctrine, increased the flexibility of their attack formations, stressed the importance of communications, and grudgingly adopted the meticulously coordinated limited attack as their mantra. He concludes that although many of the revisionist’s criticisms are valid, he

discovered that units and leaders modified their methods of fighting to maximize their firepower and achieve some measure of success.¹⁰

“Fine Conduct Under Fire” applies similar rigor to an examination of the organization, doctrine, training, and combat operations at the regimental level, another neglected area of First World War scholarship. Using the 165th Infantry Regiment as a tool, the following three chapters will examine the unit’s tactical effectiveness, focusing on its organization and training, defensive campaigns, and offensive operations. Finally, the concluding chapter will attempt to make an overall assessment of the regiment’s performance and effectiveness.

Chapter Two, “The Foundation,” explores the underpinnings of the 165th Infantry Regiment’s tactical effectiveness. During the First World War, the US Army fielded 120 infantry regiments that participated in combat. Despite each regiment’s similarity in organization, equipment, and doctrine, units compiled different records of performance. A detailed examination of the organization and equipment of the AEF regiment is vital to understanding the inherent strengths and limitations of this formation. In particular, certain characteristics enabled units to distinguish themselves in the trenches. For the “Fighting Irish,” the unit’s high esprit de corps, adaptive and intelligent leaders, and combination of the doctrine of the methodical battle and Indian-style tactics produced an exceptional unit.

Before beginning the analysis of the 165th’s operations, it is essential to establish a common frame of reference. First, it is important to understand a few of the terms that provide definition to the study of First World War tactical effectiveness. Conceptually, it requires a firm grasp of the growing importance of firepower on the Great War battlefield

and the “Irish” theories of Indian-style warfare. Plus, it is helpful to have a basic familiarization with the organization of the Rainbow and Yankee Divisions.

The core of this paper examines the combat record of the 165th Infantry Regiment and assesses the unit’s combat effectiveness. In essence, tactical effectiveness is a subjective evaluation of a unit’s ability to integrate all of the combined arms into a coherent system, conduct fire and maneuver, utilize surprise, and rapidly exploit opportunities. The bedrock of an army’s effectiveness is its organization, weapon systems, communications techniques, and doctrine. Within an army, a unit exploits the limits of tactical effectiveness through its cohesion, leadership, and doctrinal proficiency. In the last years of the First World War, Allied defenses used detailed planning, centralized command, decentralized execution, and integrated firepower to destroy an enemy before he could reach the main line of resistance. Allied offensive operations used similar principles of detailed planning, prodigious amounts of firepower, centralized command and control, and decentralized execution to seize limited objectives.

The record of the 165th was earned during a period of doctrinal confusion. Two competing theories dominated the doctrinal debate in the US Army, and to a lesser extent the 165th, during the war. Open warfare, as described by General Pershing and the *Infantry Drill Regulations* (IDR) of 1911/1917, was the somewhat vague set of ideas that advocated infantry manpower, the rifle and the bayonet, simple attack plans, the maximization of maneuver, and the hope of decisive operational results.¹¹ On the other hand, position or trench warfare, as taught and practiced by the French and British Armies, was the concept that emphasized the integration of the latest weaponry, the use of meticulously detailed plans, the maximization of firepower, and the methodical attack

of specific enemy units and objectives to achieve modest operational results. Although the French and British forces had joined the cult of firepower and committed themselves to the tactics of trench warfare, the debate between the two camps raged in the AEF throughout the war.¹² Many American units failed to resolve this doctrinal dispute before they entered combat and suffered horrific losses as a result.

With firepower dominating the First World War battlefield, tactical performance, even the 165th Infantry Regiment's, hinged upon timely, accurate, and effective direct and indirect fire. Within the platoon, successful employment of the automatic rifle or massed rifle fire to suppress the enemy enabled units to maneuver and seize terrain. Within the battalions and regiments, the units that could successfully coordinate and synchronize heavy machine guns, mortars, 37-millimeter cannons, and howitzers could suppress the enemy, maneuver, and seize terrain. More importantly, recent advances in artillery, especially recoil mechanisms, sound ranging devices, the mass production of high explosive (HE) and gas shells, indirect fire techniques, and the use of forward observers had fundamentally transformed the lethality and role of artillery.¹³ In 1917, Henry J. Reilly captured the dominance of firepower on the Western Front by stating that: "The artillery has reached such a position of importance that successful attack or defense is impossible without it."¹⁴ In fact, postwar studies concluded that artillery or gas shells caused 87 percent of the AEF's battlefield casualties, while direct fire accounted for only 9 percent.¹⁵ Despite its shortcomings in mobility and accuracy, the effectiveness of artillery barrages determined the success or failure of AEF regimental operations.

In addition to firepower, a critical component of the 165th's performance was their employment of Indian-style tactics, which are the maneuver of small groups of men,

under the leadership of lieutenants and noncommissioned officers (NCOs), who used decentralized fire and stealthy movement to advance their groups, seize terrain, envelop strong points, and kill Germans. The development of the Indian-style tactics at the regimental level was a transformational change from the three-line, extended order system championed by the *IDR* of 1917 and bears a striking resemblance to modern infantry tactics. Although Rainbow veterans Father Duffy, Bill Donovan, Douglas MacArthur, and Henry Reilly each discuss Indian-style tactics, Dalton Hayes provides a personal description of his platoon's techniques during the attack on St. Georges. He states that they were "divided into three groups of about two squads each advancing in open order. Each group was under the command of a sergeant."¹⁶ Once they came under fire, the NCOs took charge of the squads, suppressed the enemy, and pressed the advance as far as they could, "taking advantage of all the cover they could find."¹⁷ For a more visual depiction of Indian-style tactics, figure 1 shows an Irish platoon using decentralized fire and maneuver to advance in April 1918. In an intriguing nod to their German adversaries, the veterans also referred to these procedures as "infiltration tactics."¹⁸ Both Indian-style and infiltration tactics will be used to describe these techniques throughout the thesis. Fortunately for the "Fighting Irish," they developed and honed these tactics at Ancerville and used them with great success through the remainder of the war.



Figure 1. Elements of the 165th Infantry Regiment Advancing Using Indian-Style Tactics

Reprinted, by permission, from the *US Official Pictures of the World War*, Special New York Edition (Washington, D.C.: Pictorial Bureau, 1920), 104.

Throughout the war, the regiment fought as part of the 42nd Division, which, like all AEF divisions was an organization double the size of a European division. The Rainbow Division, as it was known, was organized on 6 September 1917 by federalizing National Guard units from twenty-six states to form a nationwide division that could deploy quickly to France. Among those selected to be part of the new 28,000-man outfit was New York's 69th Infantry Regiment, soon to be redesignated the 165th Infantry

Regiment. The 69th/165th would be part of the newly formed 83rd Brigade, along with the 166th, or Buckeye (Ohio) Regiment. The 83rd's sister unit, the 84th Brigade, received the 167th, or Alabama, and the 168th, or Iowa, Infantry Regiments. In addition, the division fielded the 67th Field Artillery Brigade with two regiments of 75-millimeter howitzers, one regiment of 155-millimeter howitzers, and the 117th Trench Mortar Battery. Amazingly, the division mustered almost 12,000 infantrymen, since its stated role was to create a crushing blow using infantry to crack enemy lines, race through the breach, and destroy the enemy in the open.¹⁹ By the end of the war, the Rainbow had compiled a remarkable record during six campaigns and over 160 days in the combat--many postwar scholars considered it among the top three divisions in the AEF.²⁰ Over the course of the next eighteen months, the 165th Infantry Regiment was destined to play a key role in the division's success.²¹

The 26th, or Yankee, Division shares many similarities with the Rainbow Division--both units were created by federalizing four National Guard regiments, both deployed to France early and completed most of the AEF's training program, and both spent about the same amounts of time in combat fighting under similar conditions. Among the Yankee Division's four infantry regiments was the 102nd, a unit organized around the 1st and 2nd Connecticut Infantry Regiment and filled with the best soldiers the Constitution State could muster. In addition to possessing a similar background, organization, and experience on the Mexican Border, the 102nd Infantry Regiment's combat experience mirrored that of the 165th's: the regiment was exposed to combat in the quiet sector of Chemin des Dames, defended the Toul-Boucq, fought on the periphery of the Champagne defense, and participated in the Aisne-Marne, St. Mihiel, and Meuse-

Argonne offenses. Despite the obvious similarities between the units, most postwar historians have derided the 102nd Infantry Regiment for its “lackluster performance.”²² Because of their comparable organization and experiences, the thesis will use the 102nd as a means to measure the 165th Infantry Regiment’s tactical effectiveness.

Defensively, the 165th Infantry Regiment participated in three campaigns--the defense of Luneville, Ancerville, and St. Hilaire. In each case they adapted to the situation, held their sector of the line against veteran German units, and fought an effective combined arms defense. The regiment’s defensive tactical effectiveness reached its apex at St. Hilaire, where the regiment stopped seven assaults by a crack German division. As Irish veteran Al Ettinger reported:

When the enemy reached our lines, we let loose with machine guns and mortars, and it was slaughter. They rarely got into our trenches, and when they did, they never left. But the Germans kept coming. They regrouped and attacked repeatedly during the next 48 hours until finally, their back was broken.²³

In addition, the defensive campaigns educated the Irish, teaching them to synchronize artillery, machine guns, and mortars during raids and patrols across no man’s land; coordinate artillery to support their defenses; build effective defenses with the shovel and wire; and adjust to their new force structure and equipment. In addition, the exposure to the French Army hastened the regiment’s adoption of the doctrine of the methodical battle. “Holding the Line,” or Chapter 3, will examine the 165th Infantry Regiment’s defensive operations in detail.

Offensively, the 165th Infantry Regiment participated in three campaigns: the crossing of the Ourcq River, the attack at St. Mihiel, and the assault at St. Georges. Chapter Four, entitled “A Brilliant War Machine,” analyzes the regiment’s offensive operations. The 165th’s skill at synchronizing the combined arms while using Indian-

style tactics, superb leadership, and excellent unit cohesion allowed it to seize difficult terrain and defeat excellent German units. Repeatedly, the regiment coordinated infantry, mortars, artillery, tanks, and gas and flame units to their advantage, allowing it to advance against tremendous odds. It is not an understatement to say that the Rainbow Division's success during the crossing of the Ourcq rested upon the Irish doughboy's "tenacity in pushing forward and hanging on."²⁴ Despite suffering heavy casualties, the regimental assaults achieved a level of tactical effectiveness unmatched by all but a handful of AEF regiments.

The carnage of a First World War assault is almost incomprehensible today. On the first day of the Somme, the British Army lost twenty thousand soldiers killed and forty thousand wounded. By the time the AEF entered the war, it was still not uncommon for a division to lose a quarter of its strength (approximately 7,000 soldiers) in a hard day's fighting. Even phenomenal organizations, like the German stormtroop units, the Canadian Corps, and the Australian Army, despite their use of prodigious quantities of artillery, still suffered tremendous amounts of casualties while achieving limited gains. For perspective, even successful operations, like the Ludendorff Peace Offensive where the German Army suffered 33 percent casualties or the "Hundred Days" campaign where the famed Canadian Corps endured almost 44 percent casualties, were bloody affairs.²⁵ To make an accurate assessment of an assault's success, it is imperative to discard today's metric that considers a unit combat ineffective if it suffers over 30 percent casualties. Thus, a First World War assault would be considered successful if the unit accomplished the mission and suffered less than 38 percent casualties.²⁶

There was “no genuinely economical solution to trench warfare” on the Western Front.²⁷ In particular, the AEF had more challenges than other armies at finding a solution due to its rapid expansion and deployment, dysfunctional tactical doctrine, incoherent training strategy, and chaotic personnel system. However, the 165th Infantry Regiment overcame these obstacles as it repeatedly conducted tactically effective operations during its six campaigns. The regiment’s élan, core of experienced leaders, and combination of French doctrine and Indian-style tactics fueled the regiment’s remarkable string of successes. In the process, the regiment proved itself the equal of crack German divisions and among the best regiments in the AEF.

¹Paul Kennedy, “Military Effectiveness in the First World War,” in *Military Effectiveness: The First World War*, ed. Allan Millet and Williamson Murray (Boston, MA: Unwin Hyman, 1988), 329.

²Todd Brereton, “The Development and Practice of American Infantry Tactics, 1917-1918” (Masters’ Thesis, Southwest Texas State University, 1989), 175.

³Timothy Nenninger, “American Military Effectiveness in the First World War,” in *Military Effectiveness: The First World War*, ed. Allan Millet and Williamson Murray (Boston, MA: Unwin Hyman, 1988), 145.

⁴Francis Duffy, *Father Duffy’s Story* (New York: George H. Doran Company, 1919), 263-264.

⁵Brereton, 175.

⁶John J. Pershing, *Final Report of General John J. Pershing, Commander-in-Chief, AEF* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1920), 44.

⁷Nenninger, 153.

⁸James Rainey, “Ambivalent Warfare: The Tactical Doctrine of the AEF in World War I,” *Parameters* 8, no. 3 (September 1983): 44.

⁹Brereton, x.

¹⁰Mark E. Grothelueschen, “The AEF Way of War: The American Army and Combat in the First World War” (Ph.D. diss., Texas A&M University, 2003), 1-6 and 274-287.

¹¹Ibid., 4.

¹²Ibid.

¹³Boyd L. Dastrup, *King of Battle* (Fort Monroe, VA: Us Army Training and Doctrine Command, 1993), 145-176.

¹⁴Mark E. Grothelueschen, *Doctrine Under Trial: American Artillery Employment in World War I* (Westport, CN: Greenwood Press, 2001), 5.

¹⁵Ibid., 138, 152. Henry J. Reilly, the commander of the 149th FAR and the 83rd Brigade during the war, played a critical role in the development of the Rainbow artillery doctrine. In addition, Charles P. Summerall, 67th FA Brigade Commander and a passionate firepower advocate, also was a key contributor to the growth of Rainbow artillery doctrine before his departure to command the 1st Division.

¹⁶Dalton Smith Hayes, “World War I Experience, 1919 (?)” TMs (Photocopy). Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library, Fremont, OH.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Duffy, 181.

¹⁹Grotelueschen, “The AEF Way of War,” 19. Also, please refer to the 42nd Division Table of Organization on page 98 of this thesis.

²⁰Paul F. Braim, “The Test of Battle: The AEF in the Meuse-Argonne Campaign, 26 September - 11 November 1918” (Ph.D. diss., University of Delaware, 1983), 332.

²¹For a discussion of the formation and training of the Rainbow, see James J. Cooke, *The Rainbow Division in the Great War: 1917-1919* (Westport, CN: Praeger Publishers, 1994), 1-52.

²²Grothelueschen, “The AEF Way of War,” 114.

²³A. Churchill Ettinger, ed., *A Doughboy with the Fighting 69th* (Shippensburg, PA: White Main Publishing, 1992), 140-141.

²⁴William J. Donovan letter to wife, France, 7 August 1918, transcript at Military History Institute, Carlisle, PA, Box 132A.

²⁵For discussion of First World War casualties, see Grothelueschen, “The AEF Way of War,” 80.

²⁶I averaged the casualty figures of the German and Canadian units to arrive at the figures of 38 percent.

²⁷Brereton, 173.

CHAPTER 2

THE FOUNDATION

The foundation of an army's tactical effectiveness rests upon its organization, weapon systems, communication techniques, and doctrine. Within an army, each organization's cohesion, leadership, and doctrinal proficiency determine its ability to exploit the limits of an army's tactical prowess. Throughout the war, the 165th Infantry Regiment's 3,755 soldiers, 192 automatic rifles, 16 heavy machine guns, 6 three-inch Stokes mortars, and 3 37-millimeter cannons matched the equipment of the US Army's other infantry regiments. However, the regiment's splendid cohesiveness, superb and adaptive leadership, and quick adoption of trench warfare doctrine set it apart from its peers and enabled it to push the limits of AEF tactical effectiveness.¹

Unit Cohesion

The 165th Infantry Regiment's superb unit cohesion distinguished it from the AEF's other 120 regiments that saw combat on the Western Front. For the purposes of this thesis, unit cohesion is defined as the controlled, interactive forces that create solidarity within military units, directing soldiers towards a common goal.² The forces that create cohesion include morale, esprit de corps, motivation, shared goals, teamwork, and group pride. For the 165th, the regiment's proud heritage from the Civil War and Mexican Border, self-perception as an elite unit, and demanding training in the United States and France combined to forge extremely high esprit. The 165th's excellent cohesiveness was a key ingredient in its superior combat performance.

The 165th Infantry Regiment's proud heritage dated back to its creation as the 69th New York State Militia Regiment in 1851. After fighting "like heroes" at the Battle

of Bull Run, the regiment was reconstituted as the 69th New York Volunteers, part of the storied Irish Brigade.³ The regiment, known as the “Fighting 69th,” continued to distinguish itself in every major battle of the Civil War--Antietam, Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, Gettysburg, the Wilderness, Spotsylvania, Cold Harbor, and Petersburg--as it suffered tremendous casualties. At war’s end, the Irish were nationally renowned for their six “brilliant, though hopeless assaults on our [Confederate] lines” at Mayre’s Heights during the battle of Fredericksburg.⁴ Exploits like these created a powerful reservoir of regimental pride. Fifty years later, the doughboys of the 165th drew upon the regiment’s distinguished record during the Civil War as a source of strength.

The “Fighting 69th” next answered the nation’s call during General John Pershing’s Punitive Expedition. Stationed near Hidalgo, Texas, from July 1916 to March 1917, the soldiers spent long days conducting close order drill, marching long distances, practicing marksmanship, and guarding the border. In addition, weekly articles on the unit’s border experience in the *New York Times* elevated the 69th’s reputation. Although the regiment’s exposure to combat was limited to one firefight, the Irish gained valuable experience in conducting patrols, leading soldiers, and making tactical decisions. After federalization and designation as the 165th Infantry Regiment in August 1917, five hundred veterans of the Mexican Border remained with the unit. The Mexican Border veterans were the spine of the regiment--the three battalion commanders, most of the company commanders, and all sixteen of the first sergeants had proven themselves on the border.⁵

In addition to its proud heritage, the 165th Infantry Regiment believed that it was an elite force. Rarely have American units in the First World War been characterized as

elite organizations. Roger Beaumont, in his seminal work *Military Elites*, defines an elite unit as an organization characterized by volunteerism, special selection criteria and training, distinctive traditions, survival of a rite of passage, and a disdain by members for all outsiders. Beaumont further divides elite units into categories, including the ethnic or cultural elite unit, such as the Gurkhas or the 442nd Infantry Regiment of the Second World War fame.⁶ Based on Beaumont's definition, the 165th Infantry Regiment qualifies as a culturally elite unit because of its overwhelmingly number of Irish Catholic volunteers, special selection criteria, distinctive traditions, and special training.

A homogenous group of Irish-Catholic volunteers from New York City provided the bedrock of the 165th Infantry Regiment's elitism. To restock its ranks after returning from the Mexican border, the regiment aggressively recruited volunteers from Irish County Societies and Catholic Athletic Clubs across NYC. They sought soldiers who could meet their self-imposed stringent standards of "height, weight, sight, or chest measurement."⁷ It is hardly surprising that before shipping out to France, Father Duffy estimated that 95 percent of the regiment were Irish or Catholic.⁸ In addition to their Catholicism and New York roots, the soldiers shared a common Irish cultural heritage which manifested itself in the regimental song "Garry Owen," an affinity for Irish poets, and a green and white *Erin Go Bragh!* banner. Their families also shared the regiment's cultural cohesion. On the home front, the wives of the soldiers routinely met in New York City to exchange information.⁹ The predecessor of today's Family Readiness Group helped to maintain the morale of the deployed soldiers. Finally, the regiment's early selection to deploy to France further enhanced their esprit--Joyce Kilmer boasts that the 165th was selected since it was "the best trained and equipped fighting unit that America

possessed.”¹⁰ The regiment’s belief that they were an elite unit played a vital role in their ability to push the limits of AEF tactical effectiveness.

Tough training developed the unit’s individual and collective skills, while reinforcing the soldier’s belief that they were part of an elite unit. At Camp Mills, New York from 1 September 1917 to 25 October 1917, the Irish endured what in essence was six weeks of basic training. After absorbing their new soldiers, the regiment diligently trained six days a week from 0530 to 1630 to hone its basic soldier skills. Under the demanding standards of Colonel Hine, training focused on developing military bearing, close order drill, skill with the bayonet, marksmanship, physical fitness, first aid proficiency, and signaling.¹¹ Close order drill was repeatedly used as “a means to produce discipline and bind an organization into a single unit.”¹² Despite the challenges of grappling with a larger task organization, incorporating new soldiers, fielding new equipment, and preparing for the deployment to France, the 165th Infantry Regiment departed Camp Mills as a cohesive, physically fit, and well-disciplined unit.

Arriving in France in November 1917, the regiment reassembled around the village of Naives and resumed its rigorous individual and collective training. From Thanksgiving to the middle of December the troops drilled eight hours a day in the rain and then the snow, while spending long, cold nights billeted in French barns. Training continued to focus on close order drill, bayonet exercises, daily marches, first aid, and signaling since the area boasted “no place . . . to shoot.”¹³ The regiment maneuvered constantly, as one veteran put it, “The training . . . was relentless; thin lines of skirmishers soon looked like snowmen in the fields as they alternately charged and

sprawled.”¹⁴ In addition to the tough training, the atrocious living conditions helped to increase the bond amongst the Irish soldiers and leaders.

Once the regiment marched to Langeau over the holidays, it continued its advanced individual and collective training. While “maneuvers, rifle and hand grenade practice, and bayonet drill” continued, the troopers learned to shoot the new Chauchat automatic rifle and use the newly issued gas masks.¹⁵ The crews for the Stokes mortars, one pounders, and machine guns attended French-run schools to draw and master their new weapons. At night, the officers taught lectures and quizzed the soldiers in the barracks.¹⁶ The soldiers paid keen attention, since “each new wrinkle learned might save a chap’s life some day.”¹⁷ In February, soldiers of the famed French 32nd Battalion of Chasseurs arrived to teach the Irish the basics of trench warfare and “polish off any rough edges on the growing fighting machine.”¹⁸ As Joyce Kilmer stated, “On the range and during the long hours of grenade throwing and open and trench warfare practice, their instruction, example, and companionship was a constant incentive to the American soldier.”¹⁹ Regrettably, the artillery and infantry spent most of the training cycle in different towns, slowing the development of the 165th’s ability to synchronize artillery and infantry. Overall, the seven months of training that the regiment received was about one month short of the average amount of AEF training.²⁰ Nevertheless, the rigorous training taught the Irish the skills and formed the cohesion within the unit necessary to defend a quiet section of the trenches.

The struggle to establish and preserve unit cohesion was challenging. Throughout the war, the AEF administered personnel policies that were detrimental to the formation of cohesive units. Despite the 165th’s high morale, they were not immune to the damage

caused by the AEF's policies. Most debilitating to the Irish was the policy that constantly reassigned experienced officers and NCOs to administer AEF schools, usually at critical times. Throughout the war, untrained replacements from across the United States routinely arrived on the eve of battle. Both policies attrited the homogeneity of the regiment. Furthermore, wounded soldiers had to struggle to return to the regiment after they had healed--AEF policies haphazardly assigned recovered soldiers. In fact, Lieutenant Bootz was forced to jump off a train to rejoin the Irish when he spotted the 165th's distinctive banner. Unfortunately, the Irish were unable to develop a means to overcome the AEF's chaotic personnel policies.

Nevertheless, the 165th Infantry Regiment's esprit helped to produce excellent results during its six campaigns. Together, the regiment's proud heritage, self-perception as an elite unit, and demanding training in the United States and France combined to forge an extremely cohesive unit. John S. D. Eisenhower concedes that the regiment's élan made them "essentially comparable" to their comrades in the two premier regular divisions--the 1st and the 2nd.²¹ In sum, the 165th's excellent cohesiveness was a key ingredient in its achievement of a level of performance superior to the majority of US regiments.

Leadership

Superb leadership throughout the unit was a central factor in the 165th Infantry Regiment's remarkable tactical effectiveness. Today, the Army defines leadership as the ability to "influence people--by providing purpose, direction, and motivation--while operating to accomplish the mission."²² The strong leadership of Francis Duffy, Frank McCoy, Bill Donovan, Van Santvoordt Merle-Smith, Henry Bootz, and countless others

provided purpose, direction, and motivation to the regiment during seven months of training and six campaigns on the Western Front.

The strong leadership within the regiment started at the top. During the war, five veterans of the Regular Army commanded the 165th Infantry Regiment: Colonels Charles Hine, John Barker, Frank McCoy, Harry Mitchell, and Charles Dravo. Together the five conspired to instill regular army discipline to the regiment. Although the rapid turnover of commanders restricted the growth of the regimental combined arms team, the strength of the battalion commanders, continuity in the regimental staff, and cohesiveness of the unit helped the commanders overcome their lack of experience. In addition, the relief of Colonel Hine, for incompetence during the march to Longeau, and Colonel Mitchell, for failing to breach the wire at St. Georges, appears to have had little impact on the unit. A veteran argued that “this continuous change of Commanders would break up any other regiment I knew, but this old regiment can keep itself going on no matter who commands it. It would get along on spirit and unity.”²³

Two notable commanders shaped the 165th Infantry Regiment: John Barker trained it, while Frank McCoy led it for the bulk of its battles. Colonel Barker commanded the Irish from January 1918 through May 1918, training it in France and leading it at Luneville and Ancerville. Barker, a 1909 West Point graduate, had served as an enlisted infantryman in Cuba and the Philippines, and as a lieutenant on the Mexican Border. More importantly, he served as the US Army liaison to the French Army from 1914 to 1917. His experience watching the French fight for three years was one of the stimuli for the regiment’s rapid adoption of the French tactics and techniques.²⁴

However, the regiment's most notable commander was Colonel McCoy, who commanded it from May 1918 through August 1918, leading it at Ancerville, St. Hilaire, and during the attack across the Ourcq River. McCoy graduated from West Point in 1897; was a company commander on the Mexican Border; and later commanded a brigade during the war. In addition, his strong leadership, encouragement of the 165th's Irish heritage, courage under fire (he won the Distinguished Service Medal, Legion of Honor, and *Croix de Guerre* for his actions), and firm discipline nurtured an effective combined arms team.²⁵

Because of the high turnover in regimental commanders, the regiment's continuity and cohesion was built around its chaplain, the remarkable Father Francis Duffy. A true fighting chaplain, Father Duffy's stern countenance is depicted in Figure 2. With the regiment's overwhelming Irish-Catholic character, it is not surprising that it drew its strength, both spiritual and otherwise, from a priest. Father Duffy's strong leadership, wise counsel, intelligence, and heroism (he won the Distinguished Service Cross, Distinguished Service Medal, and *Croix de Guerre*) helped to ensure the regiment's success on the Mexican Border, in training, and during its six campaigns. In fact, a statue on Times Square still recognizes Duffy's incredible contribution to the regiment.

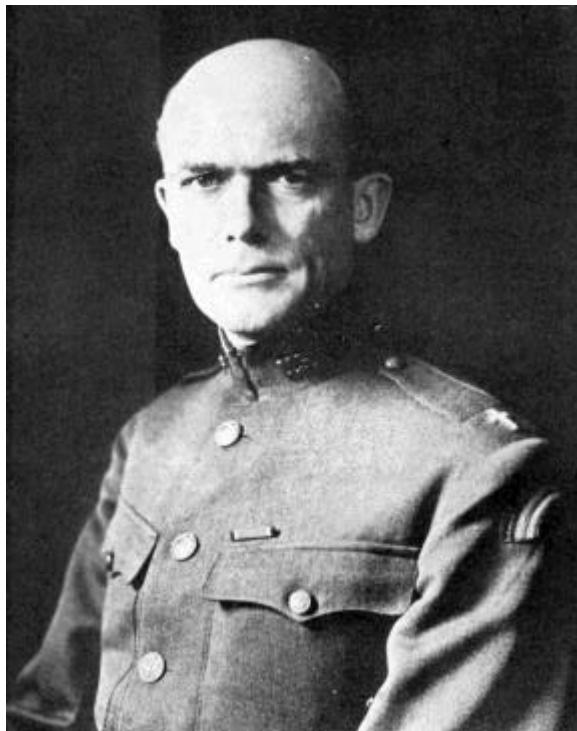


Figure 2. Father Francis Duffy, the Wellspring of Regimental Strength

Reprinted, by permission, from Francis Duffy, *Father Duffy's Story* (New York: George H. Doran Company, 1919), 23.

At the battalion level, William J. "Wild Bill" Donovan epitomized the regiment's superb leadership. Donovan, a former quarterback at Columbia, a lawyer from Buffalo, and a veteran of the Mexican Border, commanded 1st Battalion for the duration of the war. Father Duffy described him as "cool, untiring, strenuous," a hard trainer, and a demanding officer.²⁶ Very intelligent, a natural leader, and an extremely charismatic person, Donovan pushed himself and his men hard in training, routinely running them on four-mile cross-country runs, conducting (and participating in!) boxing smokers and football games, and marching many miles to prepare them for the rigors of combat. Donovan led from the front; during the war he would earn the Medal of Honor, two

Distinguished Service Crosses, the Distinguished Service Medal, and the Croix de Guerre for his heroism. Donovan's impact on the regiment cannot be understated: his leadership set the tone for the unit, his battalion led the regiment's attacks, and he would eventually rise to command the regiment. Also known as "the bravest of the brave," his rugged features are captured in Figure 3.²⁷



Figure 3. The Remarkable "Wild Bill" Donovan

Reprinted, by permission, from *US Official Pictures of the World War, Special New York Edition* (Washington, D.C.: Pictorial Bureau, 1920), xxxiii.

Across the AEF, the typical company commander had less than one year of service.²⁸ However, the fifteen company commanders in the 165th Infantry Regiment did

not fit the mold--the majority could claim over two years of army experience and service in a contingency operation. Three examples of the regiment's superb company commanders are Tom Reilly, the B Company Commander, who was a football player at Columbia, a graduate of New York University law school, and a veteran of the border campaign; Michael Kelly, the F Company Commander, who was an Irish immigrant and a veteran of the Boer War, having served in the British Army in South Africa; and Van Santvoordt Merle-Smith, the L Company Commander, who was an athlete at Princeton, lawyer in New York City, and a veteran of the border. These intelligent, fit, and veteran company commanders were among the best and brightest the nation had to offer. Each would eventually be decorated for bravery and rise to command a battalion. Certainly, the company commander's keen minds, athleticism, and experience enhanced the regiment's discipline, cohesiveness, and tactical effectiveness.²⁹

Amongst the regiment's three score of lieutenants, one notable platoon leader stands out: Lieutenant Henry Bootz, a German-born, Regular Army veteran. Lieutenant Bootz had served in the Philippines and on the Mexican Punitive Expedition, rising to the rank of first sergeant in the 13th Cavalry before accepting a commission. Decorated for bravery during the war, he commanded a platoon, a company, and a battalion with distinction.³⁰ Other experienced platoon leaders included Lieutenants William McKenna, Michael Walsh, and Edmund J. Connolly. During the war, each commanded a platoon, later led a company, and was decorated for bravery. These, and other, outstanding platoon leaders were critical in the development of the 165th's proficiency at Indian-style tactics.

Alongside the veteran first sergeants, the enlisted soldiers and NCOs of the regiment exhibited excellent leadership. Two of the regiment's stellar NCOs were Sergeant Joyce Kilmer, part of the regimental intelligence section, who was a nationally renowned poet and a veteran of the border, and Corporal Dalton Hayes, a D Company soldier and President Rutherford B. Hayes's grandson, who quit Princeton, rose through the ranks, and led a group of "moppers up" at St. Georges. These two soldiers are indicative of the intelligence and the quality of the regiment's 3,600 NCOs and soldiers.

Some historians have asserted that the doughboy was of "higher quality" than the soldiers who fought the Second World War.³¹ Although the AEF had an abundance of incompetent junior leaders and NCOs, the 165th seems to have had very few of them. From the bottom up, the high quality of the 165th Infantry Regiment's leadership facilitated mission accomplishment in the face of overwhelming odds, adapted the unit to the realities of combat, and improved their tactical effectiveness.

Organization for Combat

At the turn of the twentieth century, the American infantry regiment was a homogenous unit, comprised of soldiers armed with the rifle and bayonet. However, the regiment that fought with distinction on the frontier, the slopes of San Juan Hill, or in the jungles of the Philippines was ill suited for combat on the complex battlefield of the Western Front. The nature of combat had fundamentally changed in only twenty years and the regiment adjusted to meet the new challenges. After America's entry into the war, the regiment doubled in size and transformed into a heterogeneous formation with soldiers equipped with rifles, automatic rifles, hand grenades, rifle grenades, machine guns, mortars, and cannons. This radical transformation necessitated change and

innovation throughout the organization. To understand the effect this transformation had on the regiment and comprehend the basis of the unit's effectiveness, a review of the 165th's organizational structure, weapons, and equipment provides a valuable insight.

At the root, the expansion of the 165th Infantry Regiment forced substantive changes to the Irish approach to combat. In August 1917 the AEF expanded the size of the infantry regiment from 2,000 to 3,755 soldiers to provide the units with "tremendous firepower and endurance."³² Overnight, an infantry company's authorized strength went from 153 to 256 soldiers, causing leaders at all ranks to struggle to develop new techniques to command and control the massive formations. In addition to almost doubling the size of the 165th, the new structure incorporated a variety of new weapons and units across the regiment. Fortunately, the expansion happened prior to any training, giving the regiment two months to grapple with their command and control challenges and integrate the additional soldiers. Also, the AEF restructured the platoon organization in February 1918, transforming squads into sections to better adapt to the new weapons-- Chauchat automatic rifle, rifle grenade, and hand grenade--and tactics of trench warfare. Despite Pershing's pronouncements to the contrary, the AEF fielded units designed to slug it out in the trenches, not nimbly maneuver in open warfare. This incongruity would later become a factor in the regiment's de facto adoption of French doctrine.

Like the rest of the AEF, the Irish doughboy was armed with the Springfield M1903 rifle, hand grenades, rifle grenades, and automatic rifles. The Springfield was a .30 caliber, bolt action, magazine-fed rifle that was "superior in accuracy and rapidity of fire to those used by their enemies or the Allies."³³ Hand grenadiers were armed with the French F-1 grenade, a heavily grooved, cast iron "pineapple" with an automatic fuse. In

addition to the Springfield, rifle grenadiers used the French Viven Bessier rifle grenade, a 50-millimeter projectile that attached to the end of the rifle and could be launched 170 yards. Finally, the automatic riflemen of the regiment used the 8-millimeter, stamped metal, French Chauchat, which was a “poor weapon, with serious jamming and accuracy problems.”³⁴ Although the Chauchat’s problems curbed the platoon’s firepower, the Irish employed individual weapons that were as good as or better than any other nation’s weapons.

The regiment’s smallest unit for fire and maneuver was the infantry platoon, which was made up of a headquarters detachment and four sections.³⁵ The First Section consisted of three hand grenade teams of four men—a leader, a thrower, a carrier and a scout. The Second Section had six rifle grenadiers and three carriers, split into teams of three. Two squads of eight riflemen made up the Third Section. The Fourth Section, or automatic riflemen, was divided into four teams with one automatic rifleman and two carriers. Led by a lieutenant and assisted by a platoon sergeant and four runners, the platoon leader employed the three grenadier teams, three rifle grenadier teams, two squads of riflemen, and four automatic rifle teams in task organized groups or as a platoon based on the situation. Using Indian-style tactics, the platoon would gain fire superiority, fix the enemy, and “strike a flank more or less obliquely in an enveloping attack.”³⁶ To control actions within the platoon, the platoon leader used voice commands, a whistle, or his four runners. Across no man’s land the Germans utilized three types of squads of eight to nine men—the light machine gun squad, the rifle squad, and the unit squad.³⁷ Regrettably, the Irish did not develop the unit squad, a standing formation that

combined a light machine gun, riflemen, and grenadiers into one unit, preferring to keep the platoon as their smallest integrated unit.

Led by a captain, an infantry company mustered 256 soldiers split into four platoons and a headquarters section. Within the regiment, there were fifteen companies: 1st Battalion controlled A, B, C, and D Companies; 2nd Battalion led E, F, G, and H; 3rd Battalion contained I, K, L, and M; while the regiment controlled the Headquarters Company, the Machine Gun Company, and the Supply Company. To help the company commander lead the company, the twenty-man headquarters section contained the first sergeant, quartermaster sergeant, company kitchen, and runners.³⁸ The commander employed voice commands, a whistle, or unique signal flag to maneuver the company. By comparison, the German storm companies had 268 troopers divided into five platoons.³⁹

Lieutenant Colonel Walter Wheeler's evaluation of First World War combat declared that "the infantry battalion, augmented by machine guns and other weapons . . . was a fighting unit in a class by itself."⁴⁰ During the war, the battalion was commanded by a major and mustered 1,026 soldiers divided into four companies and a headquarters detachment. To help control the battalion, the headquarters detachment provided an adjutant, an operations officer, the sergeant major, and a signal detachment. When in combat, the commander used whistles, signal flags, runners, flares, and field telephones to direct the battalion. Again, for perspective, a German storm battalion was a combined arms unit of 1,400 soldiers divided into five assault companies; two machine gun companies with twelve Maxim machine guns each; and supporting platoons with four flamethrowers, four cannons, and eight mortars.⁴¹

On the other hand, the AEF's smallest combined arms unit was the infantry regiment, which contained 3,755 soldiers organized into a Headquarters Company, a Supply Company, a Machine Gun Company, and the three battalions. The regiment's most powerful direct fire weapons were the sixteen 8-millimeter Hotchkiss machine guns assigned to the machine gun company. Although able to range out to 3,800 yards, the Hotchkiss machine gun weighed almost ninety pounds, which limited its mobility in the offense. To assist the commander in directing the regiment, the regimental staff consisted of the executive officer, operations officer, adjutant, machine gun officer, signal officer, intelligence officer, and chaplain. Another aid was the 165th's innovative development of the Rainbow Division's first intelligence section, a group of snipers, scouts, observers, and mapmakers, who worked to help the commander visualize the battlefield.⁴²

Combat multipliers within the regiment increased the 165th's lethality. In addition to the regimental staff and intelligence and signal detachments, the Headquarters Company contained the Stokes mortar platoon, the 37-millimeter cannon platoon, and the pioneer platoon. The regiment's mortar platoon had six smooth bore, three inch Stokes mortars that could launch a bomb 800 yards, fire ten rounds a minute, and were "particularly effective against massed troops."⁴³ The "most effective single weapon in the infantry regiment against machine guns," were the cannon platoon's three rifled 37-millimeter cannons that fired shells in a flat trajectory up to 1,500 yards.⁴⁴ During the assault, the pioneer platoon would breach the wire, but spent much of its time building and improving trenches, bunkers, and latrines.⁴⁵ Usually, the regiment would assign the field artillery, machine guns, Stokes mortars, 37-millimeter cannons, and pioneers to support the assault battalion's attack.

Unlike other AEF regiments, the 165th Infantry Regiment maintained habitual relationships with its combat multipliers--the 2nd Battalion, 149th Field Artillery Regiment (2-149 FAR), 117th Trench Mortar Battery, and 150th Machine Gun Battalion--during its six campaigns.⁴⁶ The 2-149 FAR's twelve French 75-millimeter howitzers had a range of 9,000 yards, a rate of fire of 30 rounds a minute, and furnished "close and immediate support and protection to its infantry."⁴⁷ The 117th Trench Mortar Battery used twelve 58-millimeter mortars that could shoot 1,300 yards and were very effective against wire entanglements, machine gun shelters, and trenches.⁴⁸ Finally, the 150th Machine Gun Battalion's sixty-four 8-millimeter Hotchkiss heavy machine guns were divided into four machine gun companies, identical to the regiment's machine gun company. The 83rd Brigade routinely used the 150th Machine Gun Battalion to weight the lead battalion's attack. The habitual relationship between the units that grew during the six campaigns enhanced the responsiveness of the 165th's indirect fire.

To coordinate support during operations, battalion and regimental commanders relied on the field phone and tactical wire to communicate with their supporting artillery, mortars, and machine guns. Father Duffy extolled the importance of the field phones by saying "Night and day that telephone was working, receiving news from the front, effecting co-operation with neighboring regiments, or sending back requests for barrages, counter-battery work, food supplies, ammunition, and ambulances."⁴⁹ In the offense, the artillery and infantry communicated by flares, runner, signal flags, or occasionally field phones. Sadly, runners tended to provide the most reliable means of communication between the two arms during movement--limiting the ability of the commander to synchronize fire and maneuver. Another Rainbow innovation was the assignment of a

liaison officer from the supporting artillery regiment to the assaulting infantry regiment to mitigate some of the infantry-artillery coordination problems. The 165th used this technique during its three offensive campaigns with some measure of success.⁵⁰

It is important to recognize that the range of the regiment's weapon systems and communication techniques limited the depth of the Irish attack. The deep fight for the 165th Infantry Regiment was anywhere beyond 400 yards, the effective range of the Springfield rifle, and 9,000 yards, the maximum effective range of the 75-millimeter howitzer.⁵¹ To affect enemy operations in the deep fight, the regiment could use the 75-millimeter howitzers (9,000 yards), the Hotchkiss machine guns (3,600 yards), the 37-millimeter cannons (1,500 yards), and the medium trench mortars (1,300 yards). In the close fight, the 165th could bring all those weapons to bear, plus the Stokes mortars (800 yards), automatic rifles (600 yards), rifles (400 yards), rifle grenade (170 yards), and hand grenades (35 yards). After an advance of 1,500 yards, range limitations forced the regiment to pause to allow the heavy weapons to move forward. The 165th used several techniques to overcome these range limitations, but no man's land slowed the movement of the fire support assets. The limited range of the weapons, challenge of displacing the weapon systems, and communication limitations made the carefully synchronized, limited attack the only realistic form of the offense on the First World War battlefield.

Built for enduring the carnage of the Western Front, the 165th Infantry Regiment's organization, weapons, and communications gear mimicked that of the other AEF regiments. Collectively, the AEF regiments enjoyed the advantages of large units, excellent individual weapons, and integrated platoons. In addition, the 165th added to the AEF's organizational advantages by using an intelligence section, cultivating a habitual

relationship with its supporting arms, and utilizing the artillery liaison officer.

Nevertheless, the regiment was slightly overmatched by the direct firepower of German units due to its inferior automatic rifle and parity in number of machine guns.⁵² Through six campaigns, the regiment's tremendous strength, stamina, and innovations contributed to its success.

Doctrinal Debate

The Irish avoided much of the AEF's doctrinal debate by abandoning the theories of open warfare for the realities of French trench warfare doctrine. French doctrine stressed the use of overwhelming firepower during a carefully controlled, methodical battle. The deliberate approach to combat was very effective in the defense, especially when coupled with the new elastic defensive techniques. Also, with enough preparation and coordination, limited attacks could achieve success. Although maintaining the façade of training on open warfare tactics, the regiment adopted French doctrine in practice. This decision brought criticism from the chain of command. After visiting the Rainbow Division in March, the AEF G-3 recommended that other divisions train with only veteran AEF units to prevent them from being corrupted by exposure to trench warfare doctrine.⁵³

Five reasons compelled the 165th Infantry Regiment's gradual abandonment of open warfare tactics for trench warfare doctrine. Fundamentally, the expansion of the regiment forced a change in tactics as the unit adjusted to the command and control challenges of the new, larger formations. In addition, the fielding of new French weapon systems mandated changes in tactics from the platoon up. Naturally, the regiment borrowed heavily from the advice provided by its French weapons instructors. During the

regiment's training at Langeau, the regiment also adopted many of the tactics of their Chasseur instructors. At the top, Colonel McCoy's three years of experience with the French diminished resistance to a quick conversion to the French doctrine. Finally, the Irish realized the limitations of their weapon systems and communications gear necessitated a deliberate, carefully coordinated approach to combat. The rapid expansion of the force, new weapon systems, training with the French, and equipment limitations forced the 165th Infantry Regiment to learn how to fight "from the bottom up" as it embraced French doctrine, with only a few modifications.⁵⁴

One area where the Irish retained a uniquely American aspect to their approach to combat was with their small unit tactics. Seeking a practical solution to outwitting German machine guns, the regiment's platoon and company commanders rediscovered Indian-style or infiltration tactics. The decentralized fire and movement of Indian-style tactics leveraged American initiative and aggressiveness, enabling units to cross no man's land with a minimum of casualties and successfully clear trenches during patrols, raids, and assaults. The combination of the methodical battle and infiltration tactics proved to be a particularly effective technique for the Irish.

Regrettably, the Franco-American doctrine had two flaws. Although it worked extremely well during the 165th's three defensive campaigns, the carefully coordinated, deliberate approach to combat did not maintain large amounts of flexibility. The lack of flexibility became apparent when the Irish were ordered to conduct a hasty regimental attack across the Ourcq River. Due to the size of its formations, the regiment retained the AEF's doctrinal concept of follow and support units, rather than fixing and finishing forces. In both the defense and the offense commanders fought with one or two units

(regiments, battalions, companies, and platoons) forward and one or two units in support. Limited maneuver space and command and control challenges dictated that when the forward unit reached its breaking point in the defense or culminated on the offense, the support unit rapidly conducted a forward passage of lines to hold the trenches or press the attack. A forward passage of lines is a difficult operation to carry out, especially when under fire. Few units in the First World War managed to do it well and the 165th was no exception--at both the Ourcq River and St. Georges it suffered heavy casualties after conducting two challenging forward passages of lines and then attempting an assault.

Notwithstanding the doctrinal shortcomings, the 165th's gradual adoption of French doctrine in the winter of 1918 avoided the tactical dysfunction that plagued other AEF units. Coupled with their development of Indian-style tactics, the Irish approach to combat was a practical and effective solution to the challenges of the Western Front. Reinforcing this assessment, Mark Grothelueschen concludes that the Irish doctrine prepared the regiment "to carry out only limited, artillery centered attacks . . . that were best suited to American capabilities in 1918."⁵⁵ Undoubtedly, the resolution of the doctrinal debate assisted the 165th Infantry Regiment in pushing the boundaries of US tactical capabilities.

Conclusion

In February 1917 the 165th Infantry Regiment emerged from its training with a strong foundation. The regiment was a superbly led, very cohesive, physically fit, well disciplined, and extremely adaptive organization that had combined French doctrine with Indian-style tactics for its foray into the trenches. Also, it was proficient on the employment of its weapon systems, coordination of its organic assets, and the basics of

trench warfare. Although not without its limitations, including inadequate combined arms training, the regiment was ready to refine its tactical effectiveness in the crucible of combat.

¹Mark E. Grothelueschen, “The AEF Way of War: The American Army and Combat in the First World War” (Ph.D. diss., Texas A&M University, 2003), 19.

²The National Defense Research Institute, *Sexual Orientation and US Military Personnel Policy: Options and Assessment* (Washington, D.C.: Rand Corporation, 1993), 288-289. The report provides a great discussion of the competing theories of unit cohesion.

³Richard Demeter, *The Fighting 69th* (Pasadena, CA: Cranford Press, 2002), 35.

⁴Ibid., 111.

⁵Ibid., 218.

⁶Roger A. Beaumont, *Military Elites* (Indianapolis, IN: Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1974), 3.

⁷Francis Duffy, *Father Duffy's Story* (New York: George H. Doran Company, 1919), 14.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Van Santvoord Merle-Smith, “L Company of 69th Game in First Fight,” *New York Times*, 24 May 1918, 7. Merle-Smith wrote a letter to the Irish Wives Club about their performance that was published in the *Times*.

¹⁰Duffy, 334.

¹¹Edwin Stone, “Training the First American Division for Combat in France, 1917-1918” (MMAS Thesis, CGSC, 1977), 10.

¹²Henry J. Reilly, *Americans All: The Rainbow at War* (Columbus, OH: F. J. Heer Printing Company, 1936), 32.

¹³Ibid, 43.

¹⁴Laurence Stallings, *The Doughboys: The Story of the AEF* (New York, NY: Harper and Row Publishing, 1963), 35.

¹⁵A. Churchill Ettinger, ed., *A Doughboy with the Fighting 69th* (Shippensburg, PA: White Main Publishing, 1992), 45.

¹⁶Duffy, 346.

¹⁷Dalton Smith Hayes letter to Mother, France, 24 Jan 1918, *World War I Correspondence Collection*. LS (Photocopy). Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library, Fremont, OH.

¹⁸R. M. Cheseldine, *Ohio in the Rainbow: The Official Story of the 166th Infantry, 42nd Division in the World War* (Columbus, OH: The F. J. Heer Printing Company, 1924), 103. Although about the sister regiment, Cheseldine's work provides valuable insight into the brigade and a different perspective on Irish actions.

¹⁹Duffy, 346.

²⁰Leonard P. Ayers, *The War with Germany: A Statistical Summary* (Washington, D.C.: US Government Printing Office, 1919), 25.

²¹John S. D. Eisenhower, *Yanks: The Epic Story of the American Army in World War I* (New York, NY: The Free Press, 2001), 53.

²²HQ, Department of the Army, *FM 22-100, Army Leadership* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1999), 1-4.

²³Duffy, 278.

²⁴Ibid., 59 and 344-345 for Colonel Barker's background. And 356-358 provides information on his medals.

²⁵Ibid., 91-95 for his background and contribution to the regiment and 356-358 for the information on his awards.

²⁶Ibid., 25.

²⁷Anthony Cave Brown, *The Last Hero: Wild Bill Donovan* (New York, NY: Times Books, 1982), 69.

²⁸United States Army, *United States Army in the World War: Organization of the American Expeditionary Forces* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1948), 121.

²⁹For more information on the company commanders, see Duffy, 26-33.

³⁰Ettinger, 89-91.

³¹Timothy Nenninger, “American Military Effectiveness in the First World War,” in *Military Effectiveness: The First World War*, ed. Allan Millet and Williamson Murray (Boston, MA: Unwin Hyman, 1988), 146.

³²John B. Wilson, *Maneuver and Firepower: The Evolution of Divisions and Separate Brigades* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1998), 72.

³³Ayers, 65.

³⁴Grothelueschen, “The AEF Way of War,” 20.

³⁵Walter R. Wheeler, *The Infantry Battalion in War* (Washington, D.C.: The Infantry Journal, 1936), 5.

³⁶United States Army, *Infantry Drill Regulations, 1911/1917* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1917), 112-113.

³⁷Martin Samuels, *Doctrine and Dogma: German and British Infantry Tactics in the World War* (New York, NY: Greenwood Press, 1992), 50-53.

³⁸Ernest F. Fisher, *Guardians of the Republic* (New York, NY: Ballantine Books, 1994), 188.

³⁹Samuels, 28.

⁴⁰Wheeler, 50.

⁴¹Samuels, 27-28.

⁴²Duffy, 345.

⁴³P. H. Ottosen, *Trench Artillery, A.E.F: The Personal Experiences of Lieutenants and Captains of Artillery Who Served With Trench Mortars* (Boston, MA: Lothrop, Lee, and Shepard Company, 1931), 22.

⁴⁴General Headquarters, Allied Expeditionary Forces, *Combat Instructions, September 5, 1918* (Chaumont, France: Allied Expeditionary Forces, 5 September 1918), 7.

⁴⁵Ettinger, 6-7.

⁴⁶Reilly, 516. Reilly provides an interesting contrast between the 42nd and other divisions use of habitual relationships between the artillery and the infantry. In addition, the 150th Machine Gun Battalion was part of the 83rd Brigade.

⁴⁷General Headquarters, Allied Expeditionary Forces. *Report of the Superior Board on Organization and Tactics* (Chaumont, France: General Headquarters, AEF, 1919), 45.

⁴⁸Ottosen, 22.

⁴⁹Duffy, 191.

⁵⁰Reilly, 502-513. Reilly discusses the impact of an artillery liaison officer with an attacking unit.

⁵¹Current Army doctrine organizes the battlefield spatially by using the terms deep, close, and rear. Deep operations are directed against enemy forces and functions beyond the close battle. They may be separated from the close battle in time or space or both. Close operations are the battles and engagements of its major maneuver and fire support units together with CS and CSS activities presently supporting them. For the 165th, the deep fight was fought with its supporting artillery. The close fight used the regiment's organic weapons, along with attached machine guns and mortars.

⁵²An American regiment could mass forty-eight machine guns in support of its assault battalion. A German regiment contained seventy-two machine guns, although all of them would not be concentrated at the same point in the defense.

⁵³United States Army, *United States Army in the World War, 1917-1919: Training and Use of American Units with British and French* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1948), 684.

⁵⁴Duffy, 37.

⁵⁵Mark E. Grothelueschen, *Doctrine Under Trial: American Artillery Employment in World War I* (Westport, CN: Greenwood Press, 2001), 147.

CHAPTER 3

HOLDING THE LINE: IRISH DEFENSIVE OPERATIONS

The combat record of the 165th Infantry Regiment began auspiciously during its three defensive operations at Luneville, Ancerville, and St. Hilaire. From 14 February 1918 to 20 July 1918, the regiment proved it was up to the task of defending a sector of the trenches against the best efforts of four veteran German divisions. Each campaign made a unique contribution to the regiment's development into a tactically effective unit: Luneville exposed the Irish to the realities of combat and increased their unit cohesion, Ancerville developed their proficiency at Indian-style tactics and trained the regimental staff, while St. Hilaire exposed them to the elastic defense and enhanced their skill at employing the combined arms. Successful Allied First World War regimental defensive operations used detailed planning, centralized command, and decentralized execution to hold an area while integrating all of the elements of combat power to destroy the enemy before he could close with the defender's main line of resistance. In addition, good units used patrols, raids, and artillery barrages to disrupt enemy preparations, repair defensive positions, and gather intelligence. When the 165th Infantry Regiment emerged from the trenches in mid-July, it was a veteran, mature combined arms team that had mastered the essential elements of the deliberate defense.

Into the Line: Luneville

The month at Luneville exposed the Irish to the realities of combat, reinforced the value of the French defensive doctrine, and fostered unit cohesion. As one veteran noted, Luneville clearly demonstrated that the “difference between training behind the lines and the real thing was the difference between day and night.”¹ Under the supervision of the

French 164th Division and against an apathetic enemy, Luneville was the ideal place to introduce the 165th Infantry Regiment to the fundamentals of fighting a deliberate defense.

The final stage of “on the job” training sent the 165th Infantry Regiment along with a machine gun company and the 2nd Battalion of the 149th Field Artillery Regiment (2-149 FAR) to the “sinuous line” of muddy trenches near Luneville.² In this sector, no man’s land was vast--almost one thousand yards of shell holes, barbed wire, and mud separated the two armies.³ Serving under the French 164th Division, the regiment rotated each battalion between the front-line trenches at Rouge Bouquet, the support position at Luneville, and training at Moncel. While the “battalion commanders controlled their battalions under French advice,” the regimental commander and his staff were relegated to an observer role.⁴ Corporal Alf Helmer of E Company admits that the Irish occupied the lines with “the divine ignorance of which only a rookie at war can be guilty. We did every wrong thing that a platoon in trenches can do.”⁵ Once they overcame their rookie mistakes, however, the Irish fought an extremely active defense “going out on day or night patrols to scout through no man’s land,” conducting raids on German trenches, and shelling enemy positions.⁶ The American’s aggressive approach to combat soon turned the tranquil sector into “one of much action,” much to the chagrin of the veterans of the 164th Division.⁷ (Please refer to Appendix C for a map of the Luneville sector.)

Adapting to the situation and furthering their de facto adoption of the doctrine of the methodical battle, the 165th Infantry Regiment conform to the French doctrine and organization as they occupied the trenches. The French defensive model emphasized the value of a defense in depth, the importance of flexibility and independent action at the

section and platoon level, and the criticality of machine gun and artillery support on the battlefield. The basic building block of French defenses was the *Groupe de Combat*, or *GCs*, an independent squad defensive position. Usually, the Irish occupied a *GC* with a section. Located behind two *GCs* was a *Posse d'Appui*, or *PA*, garrisoned by a section, which could support the *GCs* with rifle, machine gun, or cannon fire. Typically, two *GCs* and a *PA* comprised a strong point, which the French and Americans assigned to a platoon. Two or more strong points and a reserve position made up a center of resistance or *CR*. Typically an American or French company would hold a *CR*, although it is important to remember that an American rifle company was twice as large. Several *CRs* comprised a subsector, while several subsectors made up a sector.⁸ Finally, the dispersal of the *GCs*, *PAs*, and strong points placed a premium on initiative and flexibility within the platoons and companies.

Opposing the 165th were the weary soldiers of the 1st Bavarian *Landwehr* Division, a veteran division that had fought on the Eastern Front from 1914-1918. A fourth class division, the division was only “capable of waging position warfare on a defensive front.”⁹ Although hamstrung by small companies, the Bavarians used infrequent patrols, an occasional raid, and an average of four hundred artillery shells a day to disrupt the Americans.

The soldiers of the 165th quickly developed their skills in conducting day and night patrols “between centers of resistance . . . and throughout no man’s land.”¹⁰ Sections, led by a lieutenant, would prowl no man’s land to gather intelligence, set ambushes, capture prisoners, and repair wire. As one veteran remarked, patrolling no man’s land was “in a sense Indian warfare, at which Americans excelled.”¹¹ To reiterate,

Indian-style tactics were the employment of small groups of men, under lieutenants and NCOs, who used decentralized fire and stealthy movement to advance, seize terrain, and kill Germans. During these forays, the junior leaders of the 165th Infantry Regiment learned the value of fire and maneuver, the importance of cover and concealment, and an acquaintance with the defensive tactics of the German Army. In addition, the French repeatedly stressed to the Irish that the success of the patrol depended upon carefully coordinated artillery, mortar, and machine gun support.

The month that each battalion spent in the trenches exposed the soldiers to the power of artillery on the modern battlefield. Repeatedly, the 1st Bavarian *Landwehr* Division pounded the Irish trenches with massive barrages. On 20 March, the Germans smothered the trenches with seven thousand HE and four hundred mustard gas shells.¹² As one survivor described it, the “sky seemed to open and pour on us a deluge of enemy light artillery and *minenwerfer* high explosive shells,” causing four hundred casualties in Companies K and M, mainly chemical burns and blindness.¹³ In reply, 2-149 FAR, although attached to French artillery regiments, developed their skills in firing box barrages, harassing fire, and counter battery fires. For example, on 16 March the 149th FAR sent 778 shells into the Bavarian lines.¹⁴ Leslie Langille, a gunner in the 149th FAR, noted that “the doughboys soon learned to love and respect us for the way we sent them the barrage they call[ed] for.”¹⁵ Appropriately, the Irish departed the trenches with a profound appreciation for the power of artillery and the basic skills necessary to plan, coordinate, and employ indirect fire assets.

Raids provided the battalions experience in the planning, synchronizing, and execution of deliberate offensive operations. One of the regiment’s most significant

operations at Luneville was the raid on the Bavarian trenches on 21 March 1918.

Lieutenant Henry Bootz trained a handpicked lot of forty volunteers for twelve days using meticulous rehearsals and an extremely detailed plan. After an hour's bombardment of the Bavarian trenches by two hundred 75-millimeter howitzers, 37-millimeter cannons, Stokes mortars, and machine guns, Bootz and his men followed a rolling barrage slowly across no man's land. The raiding party seized the corpse-filled trenches without a fight, only to receive a vigorous German bombardment in reply. Although Bootz elected to return to the Irish trenches without capturing a German prisoner, the raid convinced the Irish that a meticulously planned, limited attack with adequate support could succeed.

The experience of combat at Luneville increased the 165th Infantry Regiment's cohesion. One visible display of this cohesion was the appearance of the green and white regimental banner that went across no man's land with Bootz's raiding party.¹⁶ As one of the first AEF regiments in the trenches, the 165th departed the lines understandably proud of its performance and "superb conduct" of the men.¹⁷

As the 165th Infantry Regiment moved to Rolampont for additional training, the unit was recognized as a "regiment noticeable for its discipline and fine conduct under fire."¹⁸ Lieutenant Colonel Hugh Drum, AEF G-3, commented on the 165th Infantry Regiment's performance by stating that the infantry and artillery battalions had "received good training," while the soldiers had continually exhibited "excellent spirit and aggressiveness."¹⁹ The commander of the 164th Division, General Goucher, commended the troopers for their "enthusiastic bravery."²⁰ Finally, French observers complemented the Irish on their performance, remarking that "these men, in fifteen days, could occupy a sector without any French troops."²¹ As a comparison, the 102nd Infantry

Regiment of the 26th Division was struggling during their on the job training at Chemin des Dames. In fact, AEF GHQ harshly critiqued their performance, saying that the 102nd showed “an absence of initiative, alertness, or activity.”²²

In Luneville’s muddy trenches the 165th Infantry Regiment learned the harsh realities of First World War combat, practiced French doctrine, and nurtured their unit cohesion. The month had been a worthy education for the Irish--their active defense had successfully held the line against German patrols; taught them to conduct patrols, raids, and artillery barrages; and forced them to endure artillery and gas attacks. Luneville marked the Irish departure from the theories of open warfare to the adaptation of French doctrine and its reliance upon overwhelming firepower. In addition, the increased cohesion was palpable--CPT Merle-Smith stated that the men performed like veterans after only a few weeks, “due to their hard grinding training and confidence in their non-commissioned officers and platoon leaders.”²³ As the Irish departed Luneville, they had firmly grasped the basics of fighting a tactically effective deliberate defense.

The Ancerville Education

Three months in the trenches near Ancerville honed the Irish skills at Indian-style tactics, trained the regimental commanders and staff, and sharpened the regiment’s ability to coordinate combined arms defensive operations. Operating in the first purely American sector of the trenches, the 165th continued to build on the principles it learned at Luneville. The ninety days at Ancerville validated that the 165th Infantry Regiment had acquired the fundamentals of combined arms combat and could successfully conduct a deliberate defense against a veteran German formation.

The 165th's stint at Ancerville began when the Germans unleashed their spring offensive and came dangerously close to rupturing the Allied lines. To relieve the strain on the French Army, the 42nd Division rushed to the Baccarat sector where it relieved the French 128th Division. Continuing to fight an active defense, the 165th Infantry Regiment "constructed defenses in depth, to counter the new German tactics; carried out training problems in depth defense, and conducted raids preceded by great concentrations of fire."²⁴ Manning the trenches in the subsector Merville from 24 April to 14 May and 27 May to 16 June, the Irish arrayed their front-line battalion near CR Ancerville, their support battalion at Saint Poli, and their reserve battalion at Reherrey. The 165th's sector covered two kilometers of front, encompassed six strong points, and conformed to the existing French trench structure. On the left, the regiment's trenches utilized the edge of the Bois Bouleux for cover and concealment, in the center they ran across open ground, and on the right they used the town of Ancerville's abandoned cellars and broken walls to camouflage "machine gun nests which dominate the open spaces."²⁵ A "sylvan dell," the positions were well maintained, and the hard and chalky ground limited the effects of artillery.²⁶ (To gain a greater understanding of the Irish defensive positions at Ancerville, please see Appendix D.)

Across no man's land from the Irish stood the 244th Reserve Regiment and the 102d *Landwehr* Regiment, both part of the German 96th Division. The 96th Division was a fourth class division, having compiled an undistinguished record on the Eastern Front from July 1916 to April 1917. Lightly manning their frontline trench, the 244th and 102nd used infrequent patrols, an occasional raid, and almost five hundred artillery shells

a day to keep the Rainbow off balance. However, AEF intelligence rated both regiments as possessing “mediocre combat value.”²⁷

Against such an enemy, the regiment sought to dominate no man’s land. Scores of Irish patrols honed the platoons’ proficiency at Indian-style tactics. By the end of May, the 165th Infantry Regiment had “became expert in patrolling and confident of their ability to get the better of the Germans not only in no man’s land, but also in their own trenches. Patrols went out during the day as well as during the night.”²⁸ One noteworthy patrol on the night of 4 May demonstrated the 165th’s expertise: leading a patrol of twenty-four men from D Company into no man’s land, Lieutenant Connolly established a base of fire with one section, and entered the village of Hameau de Ancerville with the other. After exploring the town, the patrol surprised a German outpost. In the melee, Connolly killed two Germans and captured four, while managing to obtain critical information on the enemy defenses, including “barrage signals, dispositions of troops, and the emplacement of guns.”²⁹ The months at Ancerville enabled the Irish companies to become adept at patrolling.

Although inexperienced, the regimental commander and staff quickly learned to synchronize combined arms operations, including raids and the unit’s defense. On the night of 2 May, 2nd Battalion conducted a large raid on the German trenches, supported by “hundreds of guns echeloned in the immediate vicinity.”³⁰ The raiding party crossed no man’s land under the protection of a rolling barrage. Once the party reached the trenches, the artillery employed a box barrage to isolate the objective. Although the Germans had evacuated the trenches, the operation demonstrated that the 165th Infantry

Regiment and its leadership, in only forty-five days, had acquired a high degree of tactical sophistication and the ability to synchronize a complex operation.

On the other hand, May and June also highlighted the challenges of commanding and controlling First World War operations. During one Irish raid, the communications soldier charged with firing the signal rocket discovered that he had lost it when he had crossed no man's land. The battalion's withdrawal from the objective was delayed for an hour while a runner went back and adjusted the supporting artillery. The battalion commanders and regimental commander worked diligently to craft detailed plans to mitigate these challenges. In fact, Donovan remained on the line for five days after his battalion was relieved in order to prepare "a plan of defense" for the Ancerville sector.³¹ The work was rigorous, he confided to his wife, since it "involves [exploring] every angle of thought, every facility, and every means of harassing the enemy while you defend yourself."³² As tedious as preparing a "legal brief," it took two stenographers an entire day to prepare the battalion operations order.³³ Clearly, the regiment's orders process mirrored their French mentors' tendency to utilize very detailed orders and thoroughly coordinated instructions as the means to ensure combat success.

On 22 June 1918, the 165th Infantry Regiment departed Ancerville, justly proud of its successful patrols and raids during its three months at the front. Others shared this feeling. The "training and skill of the Americans" amazed German prisoners.³⁴ The French were duly impressed with 165th Infantry Regiment's performance: General Duport, the Commander of the French VI Corps cited the 165th for its "offensive ardor, sense for the utilization and organization of terrain, liaison of the arms, and spirit."³⁵ Remarkably, the regiment only lost six dead and thirty wounded over the ninety days. In

stark contrast, the infantry regiments of the 26th Division experienced “few operational successes” during their similar three months manning a quiet sector near Cantigny.³⁶ To compound matters for their Yankee brethren, 2,800 stormtroops surprised and soundly defeated the 102nd Infantry Regiment at Seicheprey in a surprise raid. Ultimately, the 102nd lost over 650 casualties during the raid.

Ancerville developed the 165th Infantry Regiment into an experienced, fundamentally sound formation that could successfully conduct a deliberate defense. As Donovan confided to his wife in May, he, and the regiment, was fortunate to “have been with an outfit whose training has first been in defense rather than offense. [Since] Attack is easier than defense.”³⁷ The three months had hardened the regiment--their active defense had defeated dozens of German attacks, while scores of patrols and raids had trained the staff to synchronize combined arms operations and sharpened the platoons’ abilities to employ Indian-style tactics. The time at Ancerville had enabled the 165th to master the nuances of a First World War defense.

Breaking the Assault: The St. Hilaire Defense

The sternest test of the regiment’s defensive proficiency came in mid-summer, near St. Hilaire, where the 165th Infantry Regiment, as part of the Champagne defense, stood like a stone wall and smashed the assault of two crack German divisions. At the operational level this victory broke the German Army’s offensive capability and enabled the Allies to transition to the offense. At the tactical level, the 165th Infantry Regiment’s stand near St. Hilaire was the zenith of its tactical effectiveness in the defense, combining flexibility; a detailed plan; and the deadly combination of artillery, mortars, cannons, and machine guns.

During the early weeks of July the German Third Army planned an audacious attack against Allied lines in the Champagne region. The plan was simple: after a massive four-hour barrage, fifteen divisions with ten more in support, would attack across no man's land on a front of over twenty-five miles. Based on their successful attack on the Marne, the Germans expected to make a rapid twenty-mile advance, seizing Suippes on 15 July and Chalons the subsequent day. The German XII Corps, the center corps in the Third Army attack, was tasked to cross the Suippes River and drive the Allies back across the Noblette and Vesle Rivers.³⁸ Poised to strike the Irish were the 1st Division, a veteran, third class unit that had fought extensively on both fronts, and the Guards Cavalry Division, one of the German Army's premier "attack divisions."³⁹ The plan called for each division to "attack on a front of 2,500 meters with two regiments in the first line and one in support," with over 150 *minenwerfer* and fifty field artillery batteries assisting each division's attack.⁴⁰

As the Ludendorff Offensive raged into July, the 165th Infantry Regiment was moved to the town of St. Hilaire, to assist the French XXI Corps' French 170th, 13th, and 43rd Divisions in holding the line. Rather than defend their own sector, the Rainbow Division committed its brigades to reinforce the two flank French divisions. The 83rd Brigade reinforced the French 170th Division in the Esperance sector, on the far western edge of the corps. Drawing on the experience of the Allies at Riga in 1917, the 170th Division (and the rest of the XXI Corps) employed an extensive defense in depth to defeat the attack. The innovative defense called for the 170th to abandon the original front line of trenches to negate the effectiveness of German artillery, establish new sacrifice posts two thousand yards behind the original front line "to break up the German

attack formation and separate the German infantry from its barrage,” and strongly reinforce the second position.⁴¹

As part of the 170th, the instructions for the 165th Infantry Regiment were clear--to stand firm and “break this assault.”⁴² For the fight, the 165th organized itself by attaching 2nd Battalion and the regimental machine gun company to the French 116th Regiment’s sacrifice posts around St. Hilaire. Few members of 2nd Battalion expected to survive the attack. Four thousand yards behind in the second position, 1st and 3rd Battalions manned three CRs, nicknamed Tunis, Athens, and Niger, anchored securely on the sunken road to Suippes and the abandoned village of Jonchery. Although working for the 170th Divisional Artillery, the Irish maintained their habitual relationship with the 2-149 FAR. In addition, 1st and 3rd Battalions, 150th Field Artillery Regiment were tasked to reinforce the 2-149 FAR’s fires by firing on three engagement areas.⁴³ (The 165th’s defensive positions around St. Hilaire are depicted in Appendix E.)

A German barrage of apocalyptic proportions preceded the attack. At 0010 on 15 July almost two thousand batteries--the greatest artillery concentration in history--opened fire in support of Third Army’s attack. While Father Duffy described the barrage as “an avalanche that was to keep crashing for five hours,”⁴⁴ French survivors characterized the shelling as “heavier . . . than they had seen at Verdun.”⁴⁵ Adding to the tumult, French and American howitzers fired in reply to disrupt the attack. At 0417, the infantry of the German 1st Division began advancing across no man’s land. When they reached the former front line trench, 2-149 FAR’s howitzers swung into action, adding their fire to the avalanche of steel.

The battle between the 1st Division and the 165th Infantry Regiment was a bitter and violent fight at the sacrifice posts. Utilizing light machine guns, *minenwerfer* shells, rifle grenades, and hand grenades, the Germans attempted to break the lines with their usual efficiency, yet the Irish met them “with dauntless resistance.”⁴⁶ Despite the onslaught, the defense held firm:

The men calmly picked off the advancing Boche, shooting him slowly while the enemy was yet at a distance, speeding up to rapid fire as the decimated ranks neared the wire. . . . The waves again and again broke and retreated in disorder, and the ground before the wire changed from the white of chalk dust to the gray of dead German soldiers!⁴⁷

Although seven waves of German infantry managed to reach the positions around St. Hilaire, 2nd Battalion repeatedly disrupted and stopped the German attack. A critical attachment to 2nd Battalion was the trench mortar platoon, which laid down a “demoralizing . . . and destructive” barrage on a sheltered hill where the Germans reformed their assault waves.⁴⁸ During the fight the regimental machine gun company and a 75-millimeter howitzer battery were emplaced well forward, mowing down hundreds of German soldiers “coming over the crest of the hill [near St. Hilaire] in squad formation.”⁴⁹

In the early afternoon, 3rd Battalion reinforced the sacrifice posts to the west of St. Hilaire. At dusk, the 1st Division attempted another attack, but Irish “machine guns are helping to mow the oncoming Germans down, but on they come, row after row in the face of 75-millimeter barrage, machine gun fire, automatic rifle fire, and hundreds of small arms fire.”⁵⁰ At one desperate moment, Lieutenant Ogle, of G Company, ordered a bayonet charge that surprised a group of Germans who had temporarily seized a trench

line, drove the enemy back, and regained the positions.⁵¹ Despite the tremendous pressure, the Irish combined arms defense continued to hold firm.

The next day, the German XII Corps attacked St. Hilaire again, utilizing a massive four-hour barrage to facilitate the attack of the 1st and Guards Cavalry Divisions. Between 0400 and 1400 both divisions attacked 2nd and 3rd Battalions' sacrifice posts five times. Despite the German's heroic effort, the Irish stopped the attack cold. As one survivor characterized the battle, "the surging waves shiver and break, only to form again and go back on the assault. Time after time they are pushed back. . . . their losses in dead and wounded are terrific."⁵² That afternoon, the German XII Army Corps reported that the 1st Division managed to gain eight hundred yards and that "a continuation of the attack is feasible only after renewed exhaustive preparations."⁵³ They attributed their lack of success to the Americans' "vigorous . . . harassing fire . . . on the terrain in rear of the captured position and on our batteries."⁵⁴ The attack was finished--that night the German XII Corps transitioned to the defense and attempted to hold their meager gains.

Rapidly regaining the initiative, the Irish conducted vigorous counterattacks to secure the former front line and night raids to gather intelligence. Even during lulls in the battle on 16 July, 2nd Battalion used Indian-style tactics to seize enough German boots and underwear to outfit all of G Company. At dawn on 18 July, an E Company raid used grenades and hand-to-hand fighting to kill fifty Germans and capture eleven prisoners. The raid marked the last major action for the 165th Infantry Regiment in the Champagne; Senegalese soldiers relieved the Irish the next evening.

Soldiers on both sides of the trenches praised the 165th Infantry Regiment for its stubborn defense. Captured German soldiers admitted that the "wonderful American

artillery and the stubborn resistance of the infantry proved too much" for their assaults to overcome.⁵⁵ The French were impressed with the mobility and flexibility of the regiment, particularly "the swiftness with which it could recover from the shock of seeing a position captured, and the ease with which it recovered lost ground."⁵⁶ In addition, the French 170th Division cited the Irish soldiers for their "tenacity in the defense, eagerness to counterattack, and willingness to engage in hand to hand fighting."⁵⁷ Also, the XXI Corps remarked that the "American artillery conducted itself superbly" due to their well-established relationship between the arms.⁵⁸ On the western flank of the offensive, the 102nd Infantry Regiment also performed well as it absorbed heavy bombardments and "repulsed two local attacks," while suffering two hundred casualties.⁵⁹

The 165th's comprehensive plan, effective employment of the combined arms, and innovative use of the defense in depth combined to craft an overwhelming victory at St. Hilaire. Although the defeat of the German 1st and Guards Divisions cost the Irish 277 casualties (almost 10 percent of the regiment), it was still fewer casualties than any of its sister regiments suffered. At St. Hilaire, the Irish witnessed the challenges of offensive operations first hand--the critical importance of coordinating artillery and infantry, the difficulty of defeating a defense in depth with the limited range and mobility of field artillery, and the value of the light machine gun in the attack. The veteran soldiers of the 165th Infantry Regiment departed St. Hilaire as an exceptionally competent unit that was among the best in the AEF at conducting deliberate defensive operations.

Conclusion

The 165th Infantry Regiment's experience at Luneville, Ancerville, and St. Hilaire forged a tactically effective formation that successfully defended three different

sectors against veteran German units. Quickly absorbing French doctrine and experience, the 165th developed an innovative approach to combat by using thoroughly planned and carefully coordinated operations, a reliance on overwhelming firepower, an active defense, and platoons proficient in infiltration tactics. The three operations also developed a habitual relationship between the 165th and the 2-149 FAR that other American units lacked. Regrettably, the defensive campaigns neither stressed the regiment in a time-constrained environment nor provided the opportunity to plan and execute a regimental limited attack, two shortcomings that would be exposed on the Ourcq River. But, after six months in the trenches, the Irish clearly demonstrated that they could proficiently coordinate artillery, mortar, and machine gun support during deliberate defensive operations, patrols, and raids.

¹R. M. Cheseldine, *Ohio in the Rainbow: The Official Story of the 166th Infantry, 42nd Division in the World War* (Columbus, OH: The F. J. Heer Printing Company, 1924), 112.

²Francis Duffy, *Father Duffy's Story* (New York: George H. Doran Company, 1919), 60.

³A. Churchill Ettinger, ed., *A Doughboy with the Fighting 69th* (Shippensburg, PA: White Main Publishing, 1992), 74.

⁴United States Army, *United States Army in the World War, 1917-1919: Training and Use of American Units with British and French* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1948), 675.

⁵Henry J. Reilly, *Americans All: The Rainbow at War* (Columbus, OH: F. J. Heer Printing Company, 1936), 136.

⁶Duffy, 61.

⁷Leslie Langille, *Men of the Rainbow* (Harmond, IN: W. B. Conkey Company, 1933), 65.

⁸Reilly, 166.

⁹General Headquarters, Allied Expeditionary Forces, *Histories of 251 Divisions of the German Army Which Participated in the War* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1920), 46. The AEF G-2 categorized divisions from first to fourth class based on their ability to conduct offensive operations. A fourth class division could only defend a sector.

¹⁰Reilly, 123.

¹¹Cheseldine, 113.

¹²Duffy, 77.

¹³Reilly, 136.

¹⁴Ibid., 168-169.

¹⁵Langille, 66.

¹⁶The regimental banner was a green and white silk *Erin Go Bragh!* flag, sewn by a spouse, that went over the top with the Irish during every operation. For more information, see Duffy, 351.

¹⁷Ibid., 77.

¹⁸Ibid., 353.

¹⁹*Training and Use*, 684.

²⁰General Order Number 133, *Donovan Collection*.

²¹Reilly, 175.

²²Mark E. Grothelueschen, “The AEF Way of War: The American Army and Combat in the First World War” (Ph.D. diss., Texas A&M University, 2003), 120.

²³Van Santvoord Merle-Smith, “L Company of 69th Game in First Fight,” *New York Times*, 24 May 1918, 7.

²⁴Rexmond Cochrane, *The 42nd Division Before Landres-et-St. Georges, October 1918* (US Chemical Corps Historical Study Number 17, Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1959), 12.

²⁵Ettinger, 89.

²⁶Langille, 72.

²⁷*Histories of 251 Divisions*, 580.

²⁸Reilly, 196.

²⁹William J. Donovan letter to wife, France, 7 May 1918, transcript at Military History Institute, Carlisle, PA, Box 132A.

³⁰Donovan letter, 3 May 1918.

³¹Ibid.

³²Donovan letter, 7 May 1918.

³³Donovan letter, 3 May 1918.

³⁴General Headquarters, Allied Expeditionary Forces, *Candid Comments on the American Soldier, 1917-1918 by the Germans* (Chaumont, France: Allied Expeditionary Forces, 1919), 4A.

³⁵Reilly, 227.

³⁶Grotelueschen, “The AEF Way of War,” 121.

³⁷Donovan letter, 13 May 1918. It is interesting to note Donovan’s perspective on combat and the challenge of planning an operation. Later, after St. Mihiel, he concedes that planning the attack is more challenging.

³⁸United States Army, *United States Army in the World War, 1917-1919: Military Operations of the American Expeditionary Forces* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1948), 188.

³⁹*Histories of 251 Divisions*, 29.

⁴⁰42nd Division, *Intelligence Report, 15 July 1918* (Rainbow Division Veterans Association Collection, Don L. Love Memorial Library Special Collections, the University of Nebraska, Lincoln, NE).

⁴¹Reilly, 250.

⁴²Ibid., 242.

⁴³Reilly,

⁴⁴Duffy, 130.

⁴⁵Donovan letter, 16 July 1918.

⁴⁶Duffy, 134.

⁴⁷Cheseldine, 173.

⁴⁸P. H. Ottosen, *Trench Artillery, A.E.F: The Personal Experiences of Lieutenants and Captains of Artillery Who Served With Trench Mortars* (Boston, MA: Lothrop, Lee, and Shepard Company, 1931), 103.

⁴⁹Reilly, 278.

⁵⁰Lanville, 89.

⁵¹Reilly, 275.

⁵²Lanville, 89.

⁵³*Military Operations*, 206.

⁵⁴Ibid., 207.

⁵⁵*Candid Comments on the American Soldier*, 10.

⁵⁶George Viereck ed., *As They Saw Us* (Garden City, NJ: Doubleday, 1929), 153.

⁵⁷*Military Operations*, 171.

⁵⁸Ibid.

⁵⁹The American Battle Monuments Commission, *26th Division Summary of Operations in the World War* (Washington, D.C.: US Government Printing Office, 1944), 10.

CHAPTER 4

A BEAUTIFUL WAR MACHINE: IRISH OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS

Operating as American “shock troops” from 21 July 1918 to 11 November 1918 the 165th Infantry Regiment attacked as part of major Allied offensives at the Ourcq River, the St. Mihiel Salient, and the town of St. Georges.¹ Repeatedly, the regiment pushed the limits of the Great War tactical effectiveness during these three assaults. As noted earlier, First World War assaults were notoriously bloody affairs; even the vaunted Canadian Corps suffered 44 percent casualties during its famous “Hundred Days” campaign.² The 165th was not immune to taking heavy casualties during assaults, especially when given limited time to plan and attacking over challenging terrain--during both the attack at the Ourcq River and St. Georges it suffered significant losses. However, the 165th Infantry Regiment’s unique character, outstanding leadership, extensive trench warfare experience, and well-trained platoons enabled it to defeat veteran German units, seize formidable terrain, and overcome doctrinal shortcomings. Despite large casualty lists, the 165th’s combined arms attacks achieved a level of tactical effectiveness superior to most of the regular and all of the non-regular infantry regiments of the American Expeditionary Force.

Crossing the Ourcq

Near the Ourcq River, the 165th Infantry Regiment fought three major engagements--the river assault from 26 to 29 July, the battle for Meurcy Farm and Bois Brule from 30 July to 1 August, and the pursuit through the Forest de Nesles from 2 to 3 August--as part of the AEF’s Aisne-Marne offensive. After conducting a forward passage of lines, the regiment battled one of the German Army’s crack divisions for twelve days,

forcing it back nine miles. Yet, the attack across the river exposed a fatal flaw in their doctrine: the controlled, methodical battle lacked the inherent flexibility to conduct successful hasty attacks in a fluid environment. The time constraints of a hasty attack hampered the regiment's ability to construct a coherent plan, coordinate the combined arms, and even move units to assault positions. Yet superb leadership, great unit cohesion, and well-trained platoons enabled the 165th to overcome this conundrum and seize the heights of the Ourcq.

Although the Ourcq River was only twenty feet wide and one foot deep, the region's terrain heavily favored the defender. The Ourcq valley "sloped gradually and absolutely without cover" for approximately one thousand yards on either side of the river, creating excellent fields of fire.³ In addition, the four small creeks that drained into the river created canalizing terrain that broke up attacks. On the south, or American, side of the Ourcq, the tiny community of Villers-sur-Fere and a small forest were the only identifiable terrain features. On the north, or German, side of the river, the village of Seringes-et-Nesles, the woods of Bois Colas and Bois Brule, and Meurcy Farm sat on the heights. Dominating the crest of the hill was the German strongpoint of the Meurcy Farm, which consisted of an isolated stone house, barn, and outbuildings surrounded by a low stone wall.⁴ (For more information on the terrain and the assault, please consult Appendix F, Map of the Ourcq)

After the failure of the Champagne offensive, the German Supreme Command decided to evacuate the Marne Salient as an economy of force measure. To delay the Allied advance, the German Army constructed successive defensive lines at key points across the salient. On the night of the twenty-sixth of July the Wichura Corps ordered its

forces to withdraw to the north bank of the Ourcq River and defend. To reinforce the Dora Line, the corps ordered the 4th Guards Division, “a first class fighting division,” to take up defensive positions near Seringes-et-Nesles.⁵ The veteran division had distinguished itself on both fronts, and many considered it to possess the “crack troopers of the German Army.”⁶ Although the Dora Line was established only a week before, the 4th Guards Division quickly constructed “elaborate defensive positions” of deep foxholes along the heights.⁷ The Guards validated its reputation by masterfully employing its machine guns and using their artillery “to lash the roads and the trees and the woods with shrapnel and HE.”⁸ Finally, the Germans enjoyed air supremacy during the twelve-day fight, which increased the accuracy of their artillery, disrupted the Irish attacks by strafing and bombing, and “got on everyone’s nerves.”⁹ The combination of excellent defensive terrain; a veteran unit occupying prepared positions; and a well-coordinated defense supported by machine guns, artillery, and airplanes created extremely difficult conditions for an attack.

At the operational level, the Allies launched the Aisne-Marne offensive, or the reduction of the Marne salient, on 19 July. The plan called for the French Fifth Army to attack its eastern side, while the French Sixth and Tenth Armies would strike at the tip. As part of the offensive, the Rainbow Division was reassigned to the American I Corps, which served as part of the French Sixth Army. I Corps’ first combat operation would use three divisions, with the Rainbow Division in the vanguard, to attack the salient’s apex and drive towards the Vesle River.

As the 165th prepared for its first regimental attack, it encountered friction at every turn. Two days before the assault, the regiment received almost six hundred

untrained replacements to replenish the losses of the last six months. Unfortunately, many of these men would be dead on the slopes of the Ourcq only days later. After relieving the French 167th Division after midnight on 26 July, the Irish moved forward to assault positions near the small town of Villers-sur-Fere on 27 July. Disappointingly, I Corps had inadequate controls in place for the approach march, causing traffic jams for miles near the front. In the chaotic traffic jams, the Irish were separated from their supporting artillery.

Friction continued to plague the operation when the 42nd Division received six hours notice to execute the attack across the Ourcq. Lack of time forced the Rainbow Division to launch an uncoordinated attack that left the assault regiments vulnerable to enfilading fire. At the regimental level, the Irish were forced to attack without the benefit of their artillery, since the howitzers were still stuck in traffic. Instead, the regiment relied upon its Stokes mortar platoon and machinegun company to cover the advance of 3rd Battalion's K and L Companies. At the lower echelons, the lack of time compounded problems by limiting information and situational awareness among the leaders, preventing the distribution of maps, and forcing units to rely on verbal orders to coordinate the movement of men and equipment.

However, the pre-dawn assault and lack of heavy preparatory fires surprised the 4th Guards Division--McKenna's Battalion crossed the river undetected and overran several outposts. When the sun came up the Germans reacted savagely, pouring "heavy enfilade machine gun fire from right and left" on the Irish as they moved north.¹⁰ Using the small valleys, the attack divided into small groups that calmly advanced using infiltration tactics. Father Duffy described the assault by saying that "men crawled on

their bellies like Indians now. The rifles were crackling all around, their sharp bursts of fire drowning at times the incessant pop, pop, pop of the [German] machine guns.”¹¹ As the fighting raged into the mid-morning, Major McKenna again attempted to coordinate artillery support, only to discover it still wasn’t in position. The uncoordinated and unsupported attack could not seize the heights. With the attack spent, 3rd Battalion was forced to dig in at noon and try to hold their foothold across the Ourcq.

During the afternoon of 28 July, the 165th was ordered to make another attempt to seize the heights at sunrise the next morning. An adaptive organization, the regiment applied the lessons of 28 July and spent the remainder of the day planning, preparing, and coordinating an attack supported by machine guns, mortars, 37-millimeter cannons, and the howitzers of the 151st FAR. Before the attack, even Donovan complained that the machine gun battalion had moved so far forward “that it was very difficult to move.”¹² The next morning Major Anderson, with E and F Company in front, led 2nd Battalion across the river at 0445. Without suffering a casualty, the battalion rushed down the slope, across the bridge, and started up the hill towards Seringes and Bois Colas. In response the Germans focused withering machinegun fire on the attacking Irish, but 2nd Battalion, using folds in the ground, fire and maneuver, and 75-millimeter howitzers, slowly advanced. When the battalion encountered machinegun nests, Anderson coordinated direct fire from one pounders and a 75-millimeter howitzer to reduce the position. After seizing the Bois Colas, the battalion dug in, waited for flank units to catch up, and used artillery to disrupt German counterattacks.

After 2nd Battalion crossed the river, Donovan followed with 1st Battalion at 0930, relieved 3rd Battalion, and resumed the attack up the slopes. Once again, the

regiment's well-trained small units, slowly moved forward in spite of the determined German defenders. Donovan described the advance to seize the area around the Meurcy Farm:

Company commanders sent their men forward as we used to do in the olden days, which is, one, two, or three at a time, moving fast, and when they have advanced a few yards to flop. This gives the machine gunners a small target to fire at, and the smaller target and less time we could present it, the better it would be. Then, covering the advance, I had our own machine gunners open in the general direction of where I heard the Bosche machine guns fire. And then I put with each machine gun snipers to pick off the Bosche personnel. With that system working, we went up the valley.¹³

By mid-afternoon the Irish held the strongpoint after bitter hand-to-hand fighting.

In their first regimental assault, the Irish managed to seize the heights in the face of adversity by coupling Indian-style tactics with the methodical combined arms fight.

The next day the division was ordered forward to secure the road between Chateau de Nesles and Seringes-et-Nesles. Within the regiment, 1st Battalion would continue to hold the Meurcy Farm salient while 2nd Battalion defended the Bois Colas. Much to the chagrin of the Irish, elements of the 4th Guards launched a violent counterattack that briefly threw them out of the farm. After recovering from the shock, D Company regrouped and, using machine guns, rifle grenades, and Stokes mortars, retook the farm. One veteran considered the hand-to-hand fight for Meurcy Farm “the outstanding feat in this advance.”¹⁴ The Germans attempted another counterattack that afternoon, but D Company repulsed it.

With the Alabama (167th) Regiment's attack still stalled on the slope, Donovan decided to clear the Bois Brule on 31 July. This attack was the regiment's most impressive operation of the battle. The 30th Engineer Company, part of the 1st Gas Regiment, was attached to the battalion to support the attack. After pounding the woods

with 140 rounds of thermite and white phosphorus rounds; barrages from the 75-millimeter howitzers; and salvos from his Stokes mortar, one pounder, and machine gun battery, Donovan divided his assault force into five man groups “and made the noncoms take them down the field as a little team.”¹⁵ The well-coordinated combined arms attack coupled with Indian-style tactics surprised and overwhelmed the Germans--the Irish seized Bois Brule without suffering a casualty. Afterwards, Colonel McCoy wrote a letter to the 67th FA Brigade thanking them for their “perfectly accurate” fire in support of the attacks at Bois Colas, Meurcy Farm, and Bois Brule.¹⁶

Throughout the fight, the regiment exhibited superb leadership at every level. At the top, Father Duffy attests that Colonel McCoy’s “stimulus” played a critical role in the unit securing the heights above the Ourcq.¹⁷ On 29 July McCoy established his regimental PC on the north side of the river, so he could personally “view the battle.”¹⁸ Once connected by field phone, he spent much of the next several days “affecting [sic] cooperation with neighboring regiments and sending back requests for barrages.”¹⁹ At the battalion level on 31 July, Wild Bill Donovan moved forward to an observation post and used a field telephone for much of the day to coordinate an improvised battery to neutralize German strong points surrounding the Meurcy Farm salient. Skillfully coordinating the fire, he used the “Stokes and the 37mm to strike some of the shell holes where the Germans were hidden, and as they would start to get away we would shoot them up with the machine guns.”²⁰ The story was the same at the company level, where Sergeant Richard W. O’Neill’s heroic actions during the assault on Meurcy Farm earned him the Medal of Honor. His citation reads “In advance of an assaulting line, he attacked a detachment of about twenty-five of the enemy. In the ensuing hand-to-hand encounter

he sustained pistol wounds, but heroically continued in the advance, during which he received additional wounds: but, with great physical effort, he remained in active command of his detachment.”²¹ As they had shown during the defensive campaigns, superb leadership from throughout the ranks made the difference between success and failure in an Irish operation.

The regiment’s pursuit through the Forest de Nesles was anticlimactic. When the 32nd Division flanked the Dora line by seizing Hill 212 on 31 July, the Wichura Corps ordered a withdrawal to the Vesle River. Under the cover of intense artillery fire on the night of 1-2 August, the 4th Guards Division moved north, as part of the first phase of the withdrawal. Discovering the Guards’ departure, the regiment, with 3rd Battalion in the lead, rapidly advanced three thousand yards through the Forest de Nesles until they clashed with elements of the 1st Bavarian Division. After the 4th Division relieved the regiment on 3 August, the Irish departed the line battered, but with the knowledge that they had seized their objective despite challenging conditions.

The long days of “fierce infantry fighting” along the Ourcq took their toll on the Irish.²² The assaults were bloody--the regiment lost 1,354 casualties, 42 percent of the unit, during its twelve days of combat.²³ In D Company alone, Dalton Hayes stated that there were only ninety men left out of 250. Even by First World War standards for successful attacks, the regiment suffered excessive casualties while securing its objectives. As he walked across the battlefield, Donovan estimated that five Germans died for every member of the Irish killed.²⁴ Although body counts were not used in the First World War, using Donovan’s assumption, the 4th Prussian Guards Division would have lost close to 1,200 killed. In comparison to the Irish, the 26th Division’s 102nd

Infantry Regiment fought for ten days during the German Army's initial withdrawal from the salient, suffered 924 casualties (almost 33 percent of the force), and advanced nine miles. In contrast to the 165th, many felt the 102nd had performed badly, citing its disorganization, lack of liaison, unnecessary losses, and tendency to withdraw under heavy fire.²⁵

Under the circumstances, the 165th Infantry Regiment could be proud of its accomplishments in its first offensive operation. Major General Hunter Liggett, commander of I Corps, congratulated the regiment on its willingness to strive to the "limit of endurance" to achieve success.²⁶ A prisoner from the 4th Guards Division confided that they had suffered so many casualties from the Rainbow artillery that the unit was forced to retreat. After the battle, a Rainbow veteran concluded that the large number of casualties were the result of the tendency of inexperienced general officers "to drive troops forward inadequately supported by artillery."²⁷

In its first major offensive action, the regiment was the only unit within the Rainbow Division to seize and hold its objectives across the Ourcq during the first four days. Over the course of the battle, the regiment conducted an unsuccessful unsupported attack; several successful combined arms attacks; advanced nine miles; seized formidable terrain; and "met, routed, and decimated a crack division of the Prussian Guards."²⁸ More importantly, the regiment recognized the importance of combined arms attacks and used infiltration tactics to successfully seize terrain. Like the majority of First World War units, it still had difficulty executing these operations in a time-constrained environment on challenging terrain. Only the regiment's outstanding cohesion, superb leadership, and well-trained small units enabled the Irish to accomplish their mission and seize the

heights of the Ourcq. Major Donovan attributed the regiment's success here to the soldier's "discipline, training, and above all their spirit" instilled during its training and six months of combat experience.²⁹ Perhaps appropriately, Colonel Douglas MacArthur summed it up when he extolled that "it takes the Irish when you want a hard thing done."³⁰

St. Mihiel

The American First Army's offensive at St. Mihiel from 12 to 16 September provided the 165th Infantry Regiment another hard test. For five days the regiment battled one of the German Army's best divisions, forcing it back ten miles and seizing hundreds of prisoners, thousands of weapons, and tons of equipment. The St. Mihiel operation was the regiment's pinnacle of combat effectiveness, marked by well-planned and thoroughly coordinated operations, extremely effective combined arms attacks, superb leadership, and small units using Indian-style tactics to seize terrain. Although the regiment and some historians thought the attack might have been halted prematurely, St. Mihiel remains the 165th Infantry Regiment's most successful offensive operation.

The regiment's axis of advance was an 800-yard-wide, flat, marshy plain covered by heavy woods, small villages, lakes, streams, and the Rupt de Mad River. Torrential rainfall over the previous several days had turned the countryside into a bog, as it swelled the river to a depth of six feet. The key terrain in the Irish sector was a small stone bridge that spanned the river near the town of Marzerais. Failure to capture the span intact would prevent tanks and artillery from following and supporting the attack. In addition, the small villages of Marzerais, Essay, Pannes, and St. Benoit lay in sector and were likely to be German strongpoints. In light of their experience at Meurcy Farm, the Irish thought

they would face stiff fights to capture the towns. (For more information on the terrain and unit dispositions, please see Appendix G, Map of St. Mihiel.)

Under Army Detachment C, eight German Divisions and a separate brigade defended the St. Mihiel salient, a large triangular bulge that dug into the Allied lines for almost forty miles. In June 1918, the German Army decided to defend the pocket until it positively identified an impending Allied attack, and then withdraw to the Hindenburg line. On the southern face of the salient, Army Group Gorze defended with the 5th *Landwehr*, 10th, and 77th Reserve Divisions. Across from the Irish was the 10th Division, a “first class division” who had tangled with the 3rd Division along the Marne in July.³¹ Unfortunately, the Allied attack failed to maintain operational surprise. On the afternoon of 11 September, Group Groze ordered the 10th Division to retire to the artillery protective line no later than 0300 the next morning, and establish an elastic defense to absorb the brunt of the Allied attack.

After the Irish were relieved near the Ourcq, they moved to Goncourt, rested, received six hundred replacements, and embarked on a vigorous training program based on their combat experiences. At this time, Donovan estimated that the regiment had absorbed 65 percent new men and 75 percent new officers since their departure from Camp Mills. Despite the turnover, Duffy retorts that the regiment had not lost its spirit and character, since many of the NCOs and officers had worked their way up the ranks as they earned combat experience. One critical replacement, however, happened at the top, as Colonel Harry Mitchell replaced now Brigadier General McCoy as the commander of the regiment. To assist the new commander, Captain Merle-Smith was assigned as the regimental operations officer.³²

During the first weeks of September, the plan began to take shape for the St. Mihiel attack. First, the Rainbow Division was assigned to the US IV Corps and marched north to join the 89th, 1st, and 3rd Divisions. After receiving the Corps' plan, the 42nd Division decided to attack its two miles of front with the 83rd and 84th Brigades abreast, arraying the 166th, 165th, 167th, and 168th Infantry Regiments from west to east. Within the regiment, the 165th chose to attack its half-mile wide sector with 1st Battalion in the lead and 2nd Battalion following closely behind as "moppers up" to reduce by-passed strong points.³³ To support the assault, the 83rd Brigade received five battalions of artillery, the 1st Battalion of the 117th Engineers, one platoon of the 1st Gas Regiment, and the 14th Tank Group's twelve Schneider heavy tanks. For the first, and only, time during an Irish operation, the Allies were able to establish and maintain air superiority throughout the fight. Ambitiously, the regiment's objective on the first day was north of the town of Pannes, about five miles behind the lines. Overall, conditions were mixed for the assault: time to plan, favorable terrain, and large quantities of supporting arms favored the Irish, while weather and experience benefited the Germans.

Plans in the regiment also solidified during the early days of September. As the lead element, Donovan spent three days in assault positions conducting "the infinitely detailed preparations for an attack:" scouting the axis of advance with his supporting engineers, conferring with the tank commanders, securing supplies, attending meetings at brigade headquarters, and coordinating with the artillery for support.³⁴ The hard work paid off. Fortuitously, at 0100 on 12 September the four-hour preparatory barrage caught the 10th German Division in the open as they were withdrawing to their new positions, causing heavy losses and sapping their morale. Promptly at 0455, the machine guns and

mortars inundated the German lines with a perfect mix of bullets and thermite bombs.

Five minutes later, the artillery shifted to a slow moving, rolling, artillery barrage as the twelve tanks and Donovan's infantrymen began moving through the muddy expanse of no man's land.

The 165th's skill at employing Indian-style tactics facilitated a rapid advance. When the Irish made contact at the second trench line, they deployed riflemen, Chauchat gunners, and snipers to suppress the enemy. Quickly, assault waves enveloped and eliminated the Germans. Other strong points met a more combined arms fate: "at each point of resistance the infantry played it safe, calling for tanks, 37-millimeter guns, or Stokes mortars, which silenced the enemy guns."³⁵ As expected, the stone bridge at Marzerais was heavily defended. Once he had fixed the German defenders with artillery, mortars, and one pounders, Donovan took a platoon, swam the river, and "swept up the town," capturing forty men, one mortar, and four machine guns.³⁶ The dramatic seizure of Marzerais and its bridge broke through the initial line of German defenses and kept the tanks and artillery moving northwards.

The liberation of the picturesque villages of Essay and Pannes were the regiment's most successful actions during the battle. Without pause, the Irish kept pushing north until they reached the outskirts of Essay, where several German machine guns and the plodding rolling barrage delayed their advance. Flagging down a passing American tank, the Irish coordinated several direct shots into the town, which suppressed the machine guns. Rumbling forward, the soldiers followed the tanks into Essay, capturing two hundred drunken Germans, seizing abandoned German food and equipment, and liberating their first inhabited French town. Figure 4 captures a glimpse

of the difficult battle the Irish faced clearing the town of Essay. Appreciative French emerged from their cellars and wept gratefully as the Irish scrambled to move the artillery forward.



Figure 4. Rainbow Soldiers Clearing a Village during the St. Mihiel Attack

Reprinted, by permission, from the *US Official Pictures of the World War*, Special New York Edition (Washington, D.C.: Pictorial Bureau, 1920), 154.

The 165th pressed the attack northward until reaching the periphery of Pannes where determined Germans once again held them up. Donovan calmly called for artillery support and tanks. Even this far forward, artillery support was still available from a

battery of direct fire “assault” howitzers and from the 149th FAR who were still connected by field phones and four miles of wire. After the barrage, with Lieutenant Colonel George S. Patton leading a group of tanks and Donovan leading soldiers from the 165th and 166th Infantry Regiment, the ad hoc force stormed the town and quickly cleared it.³⁷ Donovan’s men continued their march north and by 1355 had reached the day’s ambitious objectives. The brigade denied Donovan permission to continue the attack so it could move the artillery forward. During the liberation of Essay and Pannes, the regiment dexterously employed all of the Great War’s innovative technologies. In the process, they provided a glimpse of the future of warfare.

The pursuit continued unabated for the next three days. 1st Battalion, with 2nd still following closely behind, resumed the assault and met little resistance. Galloping across the hills, the regiment rapidly seized the Bois de Thiaucourt, the Bois de Benney, St. Benoit, and Chateau St. Benoit, and the Bois de la Grande Souche, while capturing many prisoners. In addition, the regiment seized howitzers; machine guns; and, more importantly to the soldiers, German beer, sausages, and bread. Once in defensive positions near Hassavant Farm, the 165th began aggressively patrolling, capturing dozens of prisoners, and scouting the outskirts of the town of Haumont. As the Alabama regiment relieved the Irish on 17 September, the regiment was justifiably proud of its performance in the overwhelming victory.

Statistically, the St. Mihiel attack was a great success. First, the Irish suffered 220 casualties during their steady advance, only 6 percent of their strength. Unquestionably, the Irish captured over five hundred prisoners from the 47th Regiment of the 10th Division. Finally, the regiment rapidly advanced ten miles across the French countryside,

a monumental achievement in comparison to the battlefield accomplishments of 1915, 1916, and 1917.

The 165th Infantry Regiment received universal acclaim for its tactical prowess at St. Mihiel. Army Group C attributed its defeat to the 10th Division's weak occupation of the main line of resistance and the Americans use of a brief artillery preparation closely followed by a massive surprise attack. Captured German prisoners stated that the Irish were "fresh and vigorous fighters of high courage and stamina" and were amazed at the amount of artillery used to support the attack.³⁸ Another captured prisoner stated that there were two American divisions he feared the most: "the Rainbow and the 42nd."³⁹ Major Corbabon, Chief of the French Mission to the Rainbow Division, stated that "the employment of arms was much better than the Ourcq," especially their use of automatic rifles and machine guns.⁴⁰ In addition, he lauded the 165th's use of precise orders, excellent combat discipline, and appreciation of terrain. In contrast, the 102nd Infantry Regiment lost 104 casualties during their four-day advance, as they gained seven miles. Although Pershing praised the 102nd's impressive night movement during the battle, others discounted its proficiency, claiming that poor discipline and straggling problems plagued the unit.⁴¹

The reduction of the St. Mihiel salient was the 165th Infantry Regiment's most successful operation. Masterfully combining a detailed plan, deliberate and well supported combined arms attacks, and small units trained in Indian-style warfare permitted the 165th to defeat one of the German Army's best divisions, advance ten miles, liberate the towns of Essay and Pannes, and capture hundreds of prisoners. Certainly the element of surprise, a disorganized enemy, and decreasing morale in the

German Army contributed to the 165th's success, but the regiment's superb performance should not be discredited.

St. Georges

Near the French town of St. Georges the 165th Infantry Regiment fought two engagements--the attempted penetration of the Kriemhilde Stellung from 14 to 16 October and the active defense of their gains from 17 October to 1 November--as part of the AEF's Meuse-Argonne offensive. After conducting a forward passage of lines, the regiment slugged it out with one of the German Army's better divisions for twenty days. Yet again, limited planning time hampered the regiment's ability to coordinate the combined arms fight effectively enough to defeat a firmly entrenched enemy on excellent defensive terrain. In addition, the 84th Brigade's inability to clear the Cote de Chattillon exposed the Irish flank to murderous fire for three long days. Nevertheless, the 165th's superb leadership, great unit cohesion, and well-trained small units allowed the regiment to absorb horrendous losses, fix a German division, and facilitate the AEF's penetration of the Hindenburg Line.

Like the Ourcq, the terrain heavily favored the defender. The ground in front of the Irish was a "bleak and open plain" dotted by small patches of woods.⁴² Flanking the open ground to the northeast was the Cote de Chattillon, a high wooded knoll that dominated the countryside to the south and west. To make matters worse, the prior week was rainy and overcast, making observation difficult and the movement of artillery, ammunition, and supplies forward almost impossible. About one thousand yards north of the main defensive belt were the small French villages of St. Georges and Landres et St. Georges, the only identifiable terrain features in the 165th's sector. Near the town of

Sommerance and the Irish assault positions, American and German dead littered the ground, an indicator of the fierce fighting the 1st Division encountered the previous week. (Appendix H, Map of St. Georges depicts the difficult terrain and advance of the Irish.)

Although not true across the Western Front, in the Meuse-Argonne the German Army remained a tenacious foe. Despite rapidly declining morale, the German Army was determined to defend the *Kriemhilde Stellung* to allow the bulk of their forces to withdraw behind the Meuse River. Over the past three years the Germans had solidified their defenses by building twenty-foot wide belts of wire, three rows of elaborate trenches, and dozens of machine gun positions. Three corps from the German Fifth Army manned the *Kriemhilde Stellung* with the Group Argonne (LVIII Army Corps) defending across the western portion of the trenches. Across from the Irish was the 41st Division, a veteran, “second class division” from Prussia.⁴³ Morale was still high in the division’s 148th Regiment--throughout the two-week battle the regiment fought with “undiminished fury.”⁴⁴ One innovation the 41st Division utilized was a particularly deadly barrage that mixed HE, gas, and shrapnel shells. Finally, the Germans enjoyed air superiority during the battle, dramatically increasing the effectiveness of their artillery, improving their situational awareness, and disrupting the Irish attacks. Once again, the combination of excellent defensive terrain, a veteran unit in extensive defensive positions, and a well-coordinated and supported defense made an attack an extremely difficult proposition.

The American First Army launched the Meuse-Argonne offensive on 26 September 1918 along twenty miles of front. In the face of three attacking American corps (I, V, and III Corps), rugged terrain, reinforcements, and the presence of

determined German defenders slowed the initial phases of the attack. In early October, the 42nd Division was assigned to V Corps to help break the Kriemhilde Stellung. Relieving the battered 1st Division on the night of 11 October near the town of Sommerance, the 42nd Division spent the next forty-eight hours preparing for the assault, part of the third phase of the offensive. The plan of attack was complex with three time-oriented, rather than event-oriented, phases. After a two-hour preparation by the combined 1st and 42nd Division artilleries, the 84th Brigade would attack and seize the Tuilerie Farms, Bois de Romagne, and Cote de Chattillon to straighten the line. Three hours later, all regiments would advance abreast to Hill 206 and Hill 225. Finally, after another two hours, the regiments would liberate the towns of St. Georges and Landres et St. Georges and seize additional objectives north of the town. Unfortunately for the Irish, the plan was overly optimistic--the 84th Brigade would need three days to clear the Cote de Chattillon, not three hours, which disrupted the entire operation.⁴⁵

Within the regiment, 3rd Battalion would lead the assault, with 1st Battalion following closely behind. In addition, 1st Battalion attached one platoon from each company to each of 3rd Battalion's assault companies as "moppers up." Dalton Hayes described his role as a mopper, saying one "follows immediately behind the first wave, takes charge of prisoners, sees that no enemy men are left overlooked in cellars and dugouts, and combs out woods."⁴⁶ Following the pattern established by earlier assaults, the entire 149th FAR, part of the 150th Machine Gun Battalion, one company of engineers, and a small group of tanks would support the attack. Once again, time constrained the Irish--Donovan felt he had inadequate time to coordinate all the details required to conduct a successful attack.⁴⁷

To make matters worse, months of combat had stripped the regiment of its leadership; Father Duffy estimated that only fifty-three officers (out of 112 authorized) participated in the attack and that lieutenants led half the companies.⁴⁸ To make up for the lack of junior leadership, Donovan assumed overall command of the two assault battalions and put on his ribbons and medals to inspire the men with “a visible sign of authority.”⁴⁹ Although many of the company commanders were green, old hands such as Father Duffy, Majors Reilly and Kelly, Captain Bootz, and Lieutenant Connolly still maintained the spirit of the regiment. Continuing to draw on their hard-won proficiency at Indian-style tactics, Donovan reminded the company commanders that the best way to gain ground is to move “a few men at a time and infiltrate, rather than attempting a continuous advance.”⁵⁰

The attack did not begin auspiciously. A decision to concentrate all available artillery fire on the Cote de Chatillon for the first three hours of the attack, along with limited ammunition and inaccurate fire failed to breach the acres of wire in front of the Irish. Nevertheless, in the early morning rain and mist of 14 October, the Rainbow Division rigidly adhered to its plan of attack. Promptly at 0830 I and M Companies led the Irish attack forward, closely supported by K, L, and a Machine Gun Company. Almost immediately, the regiment began taking fire from its front and from the Cote de Chatillon. With “undaunted leadership and tremendous courage” the 165th managed to advance using Indian-style tactics across the two miles of open ground to the German wire.⁵¹ However, the brutal advance came at a tremendous cost--3rd Battalion lost almost 50 percent casualties. Passing 1st Battalion into the fight, Major Kelly pressed the attack after dusk, repeatedly attempting to infiltrate men through the wire with little success.

Other options--engineers and mortars--proved equally inadequate at breaching the “impassable barrier” of wire.⁵² Under fire, the Irish spent the rest of the night huddled in shell holes within sight of the wire.

Poor timing prevented a synchronized attack the next day. That morning the Irish were promised tank support to help penetrate the obstacle. But, mud delayed the tanks arrival. Rather than wait for the tanks, Kelly made a bad decision when he chose to follow the barrage with only his infantry. Although the men took advantage of all the cover they could find, the attack achieved predictable results--every man who reached the wire was hit. After the attack was beaten back, eight Renault tanks arrived and attempted to breach the wire in on their own. Unfortunately, the lead tank was destroyed by direct fire and the remaining tanks beat a hasty retreat back to the south. Capitalizing on their success, the German 41st Division launched a vigorous counterattack that afternoon, but the heroic leadership of Sergeant Fitzsimmons prevented the Irish from being overrun.⁵³

When the 83rd Brigade finally cleared the Cote de Chatillon at dusk on 16 October, the Irish attack remained stalled in front of the wire. Although 2nd Battalion had relieved 1st Battalion during the night, the regiment lacked the forces to penetrate the uncut wire and the prepared defenses. To compound matters, after 160 days in combat, the regiment suffered from a leadership crisis. On 15 October, Lieutenant Colonel Donovan was shot in the knee and evacuated to the rear, depriving the regiment of its best and most experienced leader. The next day, after three days of impotent attacks, Major General Summerall, the V Corps Commander (and former Rainbow Artillery Commander), relieved Brigadier General Lenihan, Colonel Mitchell, and Captain Merle-Smith for the brigade’s and regiment’s failure to penetrate the enemy wire. The

decapitation of the senior leadership was unwarranted; under the conditions, no organization could have breached the acres of unbroken wire. Unfortunately, the firing did not motivate the unit to breach the obstacle; the Irish attack remained stalled.⁵⁴ Yet, in a remarkable testament to their esprit, the regiment did not suffer a single case of shell shock during the assault at St. Georges.⁵⁵

Despite the setbacks, the troopers remained convinced that they could penetrate the wire once they had adequate artillery support. The Irish spent the next two weeks huddled on the hillsides below St. Georges in a thin line of shell holes, as the corps brought two divisions worth of artillery forward. Both sides resumed active patrolling, sniping, and harassing artillery fire with little to show for their efforts. During these two weeks, Rainbow artillery averaged shooting five thousand artillery shells a day to the Germans' one thousand rounds. Almost half of the Rainbow shells were gas rounds, helping to hasten Group Argonne's decision to withdraw to the Meuse River. To make matters worse for the Irish, the rain continued unabated, sickening almost 35 percent of the remnants of the regiment's strength.⁵⁶ In a blow to the Irish, the 9th Regiment of the 2nd Division was ordered to pass through and carry on the attack on 1 November 1918. After a massive artillery barrage, the 9th attacked on the western flank of the 165th, penetrated the *Kriemhilde Stellung*, and started the Allies race to Sedan.⁵⁷

In the face of the leadership crisis, the regiment's officers and men worked heroically to keep the 165th's incredible spirit intact. Two members of the regiment earned the Medal of Honor for their actions near St. Georges. Colonel Donovan continued to carry the regiment on his shoulders; his citation states that before he was wounded, he "personally led the assaulting wave in the attack upon a very strongly

organized position and when our troops were suffering heavy casualties he encouraged all near him by his example.”⁵⁸ In the ranks, Sergeant Michael Donaldson received the Medal of Honor for evacuating six wounded comrades in broad daylight while under withering direct fire. Finally, Sergeant Tom Fitzsimmons, the acting Stokes mortar platoon leader, stopped a German counterattack on 15 October with fire from his mortars and two machine guns. For fearlessly exposing himself to enemy fire while directing the mortars, he earned the Distinguished Service Cross. The regiment’s heroic leadership at all levels was a critical factor in their ability to take and hold terrain in the face of incredible odds.⁵⁹

The Irish suffered tremendous casualties during the twenty days of “violent and sustained infantry fighting” near St. Georges.⁶⁰ The regiment lost over 36 percent of the unit--1,296 casualties--over the course of the battle. But, the regiment had improved from its experience at the Ourcq as the reduced casualties indicate. Heavy officer casualties are the corollary of personal leadership: twenty out of the fifty-three officers who led the attack, were killed or wounded, a staggering 38 percent casualty rate among the officers.⁶¹ On the other hand, the 10th German Division was decimated by the battle against the Irish; when it withdrew from the line on 31 October most companies could muster only twenty-five soldiers.⁶² As a comparison, the 102nd Regiment endured similar experiences during their sixteen days in the Meuse-Argonne, suffering 1,187 casualties, almost 38 percent of the unit. Unlike the Irish, the 102nd emerged as a combat ineffective unit when they left the line on 31 October. In fact, the regimental commander conceded that his unit “was not in condition for even defensive operations.”⁶³

The regiment received mixed assessments on its performance at St. Georges. The division's official history states that the 165th Infantry Regiment occupied "the most dangerous position for any regiment of infantry" along the entire Argonne front as it fixed the German 41st Division and allowing the 84th Brigade and 32nd Division to roll up their flank.⁶⁴ Major Corbabon, the Chief of French Mission to the Rainbow, praised the attack, noting that the regiment had improved immensely after the Ourcq assault, since "the Infantry no longer attacks alone but does so in close liaison with its artillery and making fullest use of its machine guns. It has become less rash and more skilled."⁶⁵ However, the German Fifth Army was unimpressed, reporting that the 41st Division brought the 165th attacks to a standstill.⁶⁶ On the other hand, captured German prisoners respected the Irish troopers, saying that they acted "more like hunters than soldiers."⁶⁷ Finally, Paul Braim also criticizes the attack, concluding that the "costly frontal assault" accomplished little for V Corps.⁶⁸

After the battle Father Duffy drew an analogy between the attacks against the wire at St. Georges and the 69th Regiment's doomed attacks against the stone wall at Marye's Heights during the battle of Fredericksburg.⁶⁹ The analogy is correct since at each battle the regiment suffered heroic losses, but the 165th Infantry Regiment did not continue to conduct frontal assaults like at Marye's Heights, but employed the combined arms and Indian-style tactics to continue the advance. Defeating a veteran unit defending from prepared positions behind unbroken wire was a difficult proposition, at best, for any unit in the First World War. Adding insufficient planning time, uncoordinated artillery support, unsynchronized tank support, and an exposed flank changed the difficult to the impossible. No unit on either side would have been able to carry the wire under those

conditions. The regiment's superb leadership, unit cohesion, and well-trained platoons were not enough to conquer the obstacle at St. Georges. Nevertheless, these qualities did allow the 165th to fight an excellent German division to a draw, fix it in place, and assist the AEF's penetration of the Hindenburg Line, while remaining a coherent combat force.

Conclusion

The 165th Infantry Regiment's three assaults at the Ourcq River, St. Mihiel, and St. Georges pushed the limits of First World War tactical effectiveness. During their four months of offensive operations the Irish conducted three assaults, advanced twenty-one miles, liberated the towns of Essay and Pannes, defeated two first class divisions, and fought a second-class division behind prepared positions to a draw, while suffering an average of 28 percent casualties during the three campaigns. The 165th Infantry Regiment's ability to synchronize the combined arms while using Indian-style tactics, superb leadership, and excellent unit cohesion allowed it to overcome obstacles, seize formidable terrain, and defeat excellent German units. As witnessed from the Irish experience, time, terrain, and defensive positions played critical roles in the success or failure of a regimental operation. In stark contrast, the 102nd Infantry Regiment conducted three assaults, advanced eighteen miles, suffered an average of 25 percent casualties in each battle, but emerged as a combat ineffective unit. Where others faltered, the 165th Infantry Regiment proved that it could conduct combined arms assaults across the expanse of no man's land.

¹Raymond E. Reed, "Army Service Experiences Questionnaire" (Carlisle, PA: The Military History Institute, April 1983), 6.

²Mark E. Grothelueschen, "The AEF Way of War: The American Army and Combat in the First World War" (Ph.D. diss., Texas A&M University, 2003), 80.

³Ibid.

⁴Francis Duffy, *Father Duffy's Story* (New York: George H. Doran Company, 1919), 159.

⁵General Headquarters, Allied Expeditionary Forces, *Histories of 251 Divisions of the German Army Which Participated in the War* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1920), 91.

⁶Dalton Smith Hayes, "World War I Experience, 1919 (?)," TMs (Photocopy). Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library, Fremont, OH.

⁷Ibid.

⁸William J. Donovan letter to wife, France, 7 August 1918, transcript at Military History Institute, Carlisle, PA, Box 132A.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Henry J. Reilly, *Americans All: The Rainbow at War* (Columbus, OH: F. J. Heer Printing Company, 1936), 386.

¹¹Duffy, 166.

¹²Reilly, 390.

¹³Donovan letter, 7 August 1918.

¹⁴Reilly, 398.

¹⁵Donovan letter, 7 August 1918.

¹⁶Reilly, 469.

¹⁷Duffy, 191.

¹⁸Ibid., 189.

¹⁹Ibid., 191.

²⁰Donovan letter, 7 August 1918.

²¹Reilly, 397.

²²42nd Division, *Intelligence Report, 27 July to 28 July 1918* (Rainbow Division Veterans Association Collection, Don L. Love Memorial Library Special Collections, the University of Nebraska, Lincoln, NE).

²³The American Battle Monuments Commission, *42d Division Summary of Operations in the World War* (Washington, D.C.: US Government Printing Office, 1944), 32.

²⁴Donovan letter, 7 August 1918.

²⁵Grothelueschen, “The AEF Way of War,” 131.

²⁶42nd Division, *Intelligence Report, 31 July 1918*.

²⁷Reilly, 518.

²⁸Donovan letter, 7 August 1918.

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰Duffy, 206.

³¹*Histories of 251 Divisions*, 183.

³²Duffy, 229. Duffy discusses the regimental changes.

³³Ibid., 235.

³⁴Donovan letter, 17 September 1918.

³⁵R. M. Cheseldine, *Ohio in the Rainbow: The Official Story of the 166th Infantry, 42nd Division in the World War* (Columbus, OH: The F. J. Heer Printing Company, 1924), 232.

³⁶Donovan letter, 17 September 1918.

³⁷Dale E. Wilson, *Treat ‘Em Rough! The Birth of American Armor* (Novato, CA: Presidio, 1989), 112.

³⁸42nd Division, *Intelligence Report, 17 September 1918*.

³⁹Cheseldine, 243.

⁴⁰Reilly, 551.

⁴¹Grothelueschen, “The AEF Way of War,” 149.

⁴²Duffy, 263.

⁴³*Histories of 251 Divisions*, 450.

⁴⁴42nd Division, *Intelligence Report, 15 October 1918*.

⁴⁵Rexmond Cochrane, *The 42nd Division Before Landres-et-St. Georges, October 1918* (US Chemical Corps Historical Study Number 17, Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1959), 42-71. With excellent maps to boot, Cochrane does a superb job providing a great synopsis of the 42nd Division's initial operations in the Meuse-Argonne.

⁴⁶Hayes, "World War I Experience, 1919 (?)."

⁴⁷Donovan letter, 23 October 1918.

⁴⁸Duffy, 278.

⁴⁹Donovan letter, 23 October 1918.

⁵⁰Reilly, 691.

⁵¹Duffy, 269.

⁵²Ibid., 272.

⁵³Ibid., 274-277 and 281-282. For a full description of Sergeant Fitzsimmons heroism, please see page 84 of the thesis.

⁵⁴Ibid., 276-278.

⁵⁵Cochrane, 84.

⁵⁶Duffy, 290-291.

⁵⁷The 9th Infantry Regiment, despite almost two division's worth of artillery in support, also decided the wire in front of St. Georges was impenetrable and attacked to the west.

⁵⁸Reilly, 697.

⁵⁹For all the Rainbow Division MoH citations, see Ettinger, 194-195. For the description of Sergeant Fitzsimmons actions that earned the DSC, see Ettinger 164-165.

⁶⁰42nd Division, *Intelligence Report, 16 October 1918*.

⁶¹Duffy, 278.

⁶²*Histories of 251 Divisions*, 450.

⁶³Grothelueschen, "The AEF Way of War," 154.

⁶⁴Reilly, 738.

⁶⁵Ibid., 515.

⁶⁶United States Army, *United States Army in the World War, 1917-1919: Military Operations of the American Expeditionary Forces, Meuse-Argonne* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1948), 557.

⁶⁷42nd Division, *Intelligence Report, 16 October 1918*.

⁶⁸Paul F. Braim, “The Test of Battle: The AEF in the Meuse-Argonne Campaign, 26 September - 11 November 1918” (Ph.D. diss., University of Delaware, 1983), 188.

⁶⁹Duffy, 276.

CHAPTER 5

FINE CONDUCT UNDER FIRE

Through six campaigns across the Western Front, the 165th Infantry Regiment established a record for effectiveness that was better than any other non-regular unit in the American Expeditionary Force. The regiment's tactical effectiveness, or ability to integrate all of the combined arms, conduct fire and maneuver, use surprise, and rapidly exploit opportunities, was remarkable during these six operations, especially in light of the unique challenges of the First World War battlefield.¹ Unquestionably, the 165th was a special unit, marked by a coherent approach to combat that combined the methodical coordination of the combined arms with platoons proficient in Indian-style tactics. When given a fighting chance, it held the line against repeated attacks by a crack German division and seized its objectives against first-rate soldiers. Yet, as with virtually all First World War units, it still experienced challenges achieving surprise and maintaining flexibility in a fluid environment. Nevertheless, as the regiment triumphantly marched up New York City's Fifth Avenue in April 1919, it could justifiably be proud of "its discipline and fine conduct under fire."²

The detailed examination of the 165th Infantry Regiment's foundation, defensive campaigns, and offensive operations exposed four factors that contributed to their superb tactical effectiveness. First and foremost, the regiment's absorption of the French Army's theory of the methodical battle minimized the doctrinal dysfunction that plagued the bulk of the AEF. Secondly, the habitual relationship that the 165th and the 2-149 FAR enjoyed enhanced the accuracy and volume of fire that the Irish received in support of their methodical operations. Leveraging American qualities of innovation, independence, and

aggressiveness, the 165th's proficiency at Indian-style tactics enabled platoons and sections to fire and maneuver, seize terrain, and destroy Germans. Finally, by any standard, the regiment benefited from great cohesion and superb leadership. Taken together, these four factors created an exceptional unit.

During six months of defensive operations, the 165th Infantry Regiment successfully held three different sectors against several veteran German divisions. Waging an active defense, the Irish demonstrated the ability to synchronize the combined arms, employ overwhelming firepower, patrol no man's land with platoons proficient in Indian-style tactics, and conduct well-coordinated raids. More importantly, the 165th's use of the elastic defense at St. Hilaire displayed a tremendous amount of flexibility, adaptation, and skill. The defensive campaigns also provided crucial time for the Irish to complete the integration of their new weapon systems, adjust to the larger unit structure, and practice the recently acquired Franco-American doctrine. By any gauge, the 165th performed extremely well during its defensive campaigns.

First World War assaults were difficult operations at best--few units in any army were able to successfully attack across no man's land. Yet the 165th Infantry Regiment defied the odds, as it garnered a reputation of being able to seize and hold an objective. The 165th's four months of offensive operations featured three assaults, an advance of twenty-one miles, the defeat of two crack German divisions, and the fixing of a second-class division. Throughout the offensive campaigns, the regiment demonstrated the "power to successfully attack across the open and drive a skillful enemy from his position," largely due to the habitual relationship cultivated between the infantry and artillery during the defensive campaigns.³ The regiment's aggressive, Indian-style tactics

enabled its platoons and companies to advance, seize terrain, and defeat German units under a variety of daunting conditions. Even then-Brigadier General Douglas MacArthur regarded the regiment's tactics with awe, proclaiming that they had "reverted to tactics I had seen so often in the Indian wars of my frontier days. Crawling forward in twos and threes against each stubborn nest of enemy guns, . . . [they] closed in with the bayonet and hand grenade. It was savage and there was no quarter asked or given."⁴ In addition, the regiment's excellent leadership and superb cohesion were critical in its ability to push the boundaries of AEF tactical effectiveness. Despite suffering 2,900 casualties during the three assaults, the 165th Infantry Regiment's combat effectiveness rightfully earned it the reputation as the "shock troops" of the AEF.⁵

Evaluating a unit's performance in combat is problematic. The easiest means of assessing an organization's performance is by evaluating their accomplishment of assigned missions. By this test, the 165th Infantry Regiment was a successful unit--the Irish accomplished their mission in five out of six campaigns, a remarkable record by First World War standards. Yet, the regiment's inability to breach the wire at St. Georges may lead some to question their tactical acumen. To make a comprehensive evaluation of a unit's performance, it is useful to employ other evaluation tools, such as valorous awards received, casualties suffered, and terrain seized. By examining all of these metrics, the 165th Infantry Regiment was an extraordinarily successful unit.

Although the award of a medal depends on a variety of factors including location, timing, and luck, the number of valorous awards earned by a unit provides one reasonable measure of its combat effectiveness. In general, the more awards a unit receives, the greater its effectiveness. At the division level, the 42nd and 26th Divisions ranked

seventh and fifth, respectively, amongst the tally of the thirty AEF combat divisions' valorous awards. In fact, each division earned over 250 American awards for valor. At the regimental level, the 165th Infantry Regiment unequivocally distinguished itself from its peers, especially the 102nd and 166th. During the course of the war, the soldiers of the 165th earned three Medals of Honor (MoH), eighty-six Distinguished Service Crosses (DSC), two Distinguished Service Medals (DSM), seven Legions of Honor (LoH), and 107 *Croix de Guerre* (*CdeG*). Ultimately, the Irish garnered 202 Allied valorous awards. Not surprisingly, only three regiments could claim more Medal of Honor winners than the 165th.⁶ On the other hand, the 102nd Infantry Regiment's ninety-one awards included fifty-eight DSCs, two DSMs, one LoH, and thirty *CdeGs*. The 166th Infantry Regiment earned forty-seven DSCs, one DSM, two LoHs, and forty-six *CdeGs*. All told, the Buckeyes won ninety-six valorous awards. Despite their extensive combat experience, neither the 102nd nor the 166th had a member earn the Medal of Honor. Based on the valorous award standard, the 165th Infantry Regiment was twice as effective as the 102nd or 166th Infantry Regiments.⁷

Another evaluation criterion for combat effectiveness is casualties. Although some may argue that high casualties may indicate poor performance, often there is a positive relationship between casualties and combat effectiveness. Units that perform well are habitually given the difficult tasks, which leads to higher casualties over time. In addition, formations that suffer large numbers of casualties tend to be the type of unit that continues to press the attack under difficult circumstances, where other units are apt to falter. At the division level, the Rainbow Division suffered 13,698 dead and wounded while the Yankee Division suffered 10,078. Amongst the thirty AEF combat divisions,

the two divisions took the fifth and sixth most casualties, respectfully. At the regimental level, the 165th once again performed better than its peers. Using postwar figures, the regiment took 3,179 casualties--728 dead and 2,451 wounded. Astonishingly, this number represents 85 percent of the assigned strength of the regiment and 1.25 percent of *all* AEF combat casualties. In comparison, the 102nd Infantry Regiment suffered 2,904 casualties and the 166th Infantry Regiment absorbed 1,969 dead and wounded. The 165th Infantry Regiment's long casualty lists indicate that the doughboy lived up to the reputation established by their Civil War predecessors--the Irish repeatedly drew the most challenging missions and suffered accordingly.⁸

The length of time in the line and the amount of terrain seized both provide perspective on the quality of a unit's combat experience. While the average AEF division spent seventy-seven days in the trenches and advanced seventeen miles, the Rainbow Division spent 164 days in the line and pushed forward thirty-four miles.⁹ In fact, the Rainbow Division ranked third amongst the thirty combat divisions in both time in the line and distance advanced. In contrast, the Yankee Division spent 193 days in the line, but only managed to take twenty-three miles of ground.¹⁰ In postwar documents, the 165th claimed 180 days in the line and an advance of thirty-four miles.¹¹ By both of these standards, the 165th Infantry Regiment was a critical component of the accomplishments of one of the premier AEF divisions.

Post-war, the Superior Board on Organization and Tactics convened to examine the performance of the AEF and make recommendation on the future structure of the Army. Drawing from the experience of the 165th Infantry Regiment, and other units, General Pershing concluded that the Army should maintain the enormous size of its

regiments and companies, ensure that each division kept its organic artillery with it at all times, and continue to encourage the close cooperation between the arms that blossomed during the war. In a nod to the regiment's skill at Indian-style warfare, the Board further recommended that small units must be trained to first gain fire superiority, before closing with and destroying the enemy by using dispersed formations, initiative, and aggressive maneuver. Clearly the Superior Board's conclusions about future force structure and tactics validated the 165th Infantry Regiment's approach to combat.¹²

There are several lessons to be learned from the 165th Infantry Regiment's experience in the Great War. Much as today's US Army has been forced to do, the Irish had to transform while fighting. Not simply a new, larger unit, the Irish grappled with the integration and employment of emerging technologies such as machine guns, automatic rifles, rifle grenades, trench mortars, and tanks throughout the conflict. Disappointingly, AEF doctrine did not evolve rapidly enough to incorporate the advantages inherent in these new technologies. However, as American armies have done consistently throughout the last two hundred years, the Irish learned to fight from the bottom up.¹³ As a stopgap, the 165th abandoned the nebulous concepts of open warfare and adopted French doctrine to ease the transition to their new equipment and the added requirements of trench warfare.

In light of this experience, it is conceivable that today's Units of Action (UAs) may have to develop their approach to combat from the bottom up. Both strong leadership and high esprit improved the 165th's tactical performance. One hopes that the US Army's latest reforms to the officer personnel system will enhance the experience of leaders, endowing the UAs with an advantage similar to the one that the 165th's border

veterans bestowed upon the Irish. Recent initiatives in unit stabilization also may be able to replicate the 165th's superb cohesion. Finally, the 165th Infantry Regiment's rapid deployment and extensive combat experience embodied many of the qualities that the Chief of Staff of the Army, General Schoomaker, is looking for in an organization--a unit with an expeditionary mind-set, but with the combat power to prevail during a long campaign.

War at the cusp of the 20th century looked little different from war at the beginning of the new millennium--new units still struggle to fight effectively in new environments with emerging technologies. It is remarkable that the 165th Infantry Regiment fought at all on the Western Front, let alone fought with distinction. One should remember that in the space of twenty months the regiment redeployed from Mexico; reconstituted and transformed itself; integrated new personnel, weapons, and equipment; trained the unit; deployed to France; adopted French doctrine; and fought successfully in high-intensity combat for ten months. Currently, we are asking the brigades of the 3rd Infantry Division to redeploy from Iraq, transform into UAs, train and develop a doctrine from the bottom up, deploy back to Iraq, and fight again in only seventeen months. It is certain that some of the UAs will be hard pressed to accomplish the same level of tactical effectiveness that the 165th Infantry Regiment attained during the Great War.

Transforming while fighting is a daunting task; few units can rise to the challenge. Clearly, the 165th Infantry Regiment was an extraordinary unit, with exceptional leadership, superb cohesion, and practical solutions to the challenges of First World War combat. The careful analysis of the regiment's tactics, techniques, and procedures during

both defensive and offensive campaigns revealed a unit that did not smother “German machine guns with American flesh,” but achieved a high degree of tactical effectiveness by synchronizing a methodical plan, prodigious amounts of firepower, and Indian-style tactics to seize objectives and defeat a variety of German units.¹⁴ As Brigadier General Michael Lenihan, the former 83rd Brigade Commander, concluded, the 165th Infantry Regiment’s performance on the Western Front “showed itself worthy of the old warlike traditions of the regular army.”¹⁵

¹Allan Millet, Williamson Murray, and Kenneth Watman, “The Effectiveness of Military Organizations,” in *Military Effectiveness: The First World War*, ed. Allan Millet and Williamson Murray (Boston, MA: Unwin Hyman, 1988), 19-27.

²Francis Duffy, *Father Duffy’s Story* (New York: George H. Doran Company, 1919), 353.

³Henry J. Reilly, *Americans All: The Rainbow at War* (Columbus, OH: F. J. Heer Printing Company, 1936), 515.

⁴Douglas MacArthur, *Reminiscences* (New York, NY: McGraw Hill Books, 1964), 59.

⁵Raymond E. Reed, “Army Service Experiences Questionnaire” (Carlisle, PA: The Military History Institute, April 1983), 6.

⁶Ninety-seven Medals of Honor were awarded to soldiers during the First World War. Thirty-four regiments out of the 120 that engaged in combat could claim a Medal of Honor winner. Only three regiments had more Medal of Honor winners than the 165th – the 132nd IR of the 33rd Division and 308th IR of the 77th Division both had five Medal of Honor winners, while the 107th IR of the 27th Division earned four medals. Interestingly, none of the four units were regular regiments. For more on Medals of Honor, see Paul D. Stevens, *The Congressional Medal of Honor: The Names, the Deeds* (Forest Ranch, CA: Sharp and Dunnigan, 1984), 505-542.

⁷For more award information consult Paul F. Braim, “The Test of Battle: The AEF in the Meuse-Argonne Campaign, 26 September - 11 November 1918” (Ph.D. diss., University of Delaware, 1983), 204 and 329; Duffy, 356-358; and Daniel W. Strickland, *Connecticut Fights: The Story of the 102nd Infantry Regiment* (New Haven, CT: Quinnipack Press, 1930), 329-404.

⁸For casualty information see The American Battle Monuments Commission, *42d Division Summary of Operations in the World War* (Washington, D.C.: US Government Printing Office, 1944) 15, 32, 50, and 91; The American Battle Monuments Commission, *26th Division Summary of Operations in the World War* (Washington, D.C.: US Government Printing Office, 1944) 21, 48, and 63; and Braim, 205 and 330. Post-war scholars regard the ABMC numbers as the most accurate casualty figures.

⁹For days in the line see Leonard P. Ayers, *The War with Germany: A Statistical Summary* (Washington, D.C.: US Government Printing Office, 1919), 114 and Duffy, 355.

¹⁰For terrain liberated consult Ayers, 115. The 26th Division ranked third for time in the line and eighth for terrain seized.

¹¹Duffy, 355. Duffy counted the Irish time serving in the quiet sectors of Luneville and Ancerville, which Ayers does not.

¹²General Headquarters, Allied Expeditionary Forces, *Report of the Superior Board on Organization and Tactics* (Chaumont, France: General Headquarters, AEF, 1919), 1-62.

¹³Henry J. Osterhoudt, “The Evolution of US Army Assault Tactics, 1778-1919” (Ph.D diss., Duke University, 1986), 192.

¹⁴James Rainey, “Ambivalent Warfare: The Tactical Doctrine of the AEF in World War I,” *Parameters* 8, no. 3 (September 1983): 44.

¹⁵Michael J. Lenihan, “I Remembere: The Reminiscences of BG Michael J. Lenihan, 1865-1958, 1958 (?).” TMs (photocopy), p. 64, transcript at Military History Institute, Carlisle, PA, Lenihan Box.

GLOSSARY

Combined arms. The full integration and application of two or more arms of the US Army (i.e. infantry and artillery) into an operation.

Elite unit. An organization characterized by volunteerism, special selection criteria and training, distinctive traditions, survival of a right of passage, and a disdain by members for all outsiders.

Indian-style tactics. The employment of small groups of men, under the leadership of lieutenants and NCOs, who used decentralized fire and movement to advance, seize terrain, envelop strong points, and kill Germans. Used extensively by platoons in the 165th Infantry Regiment.

Infiltration. A form of maneuver that uses movement through an area occupied by an enemy force by small groups of or individuals at extended or irregular intervals to avoid contact in order to gain a position of advantage or strike at the enemy. These tactics were used extensively by German stormtroops in the First World War and copied by the 165th Infantry Regiment.

Open warfare. The group of ideas presented by General John J. Pershing and the *Infantry Drill Regulations* of 1917 that advocated infantry manpower, the rifle and the bayonet, simple attack plans, the maximization of maneuver, and the hope of decisive operational results.

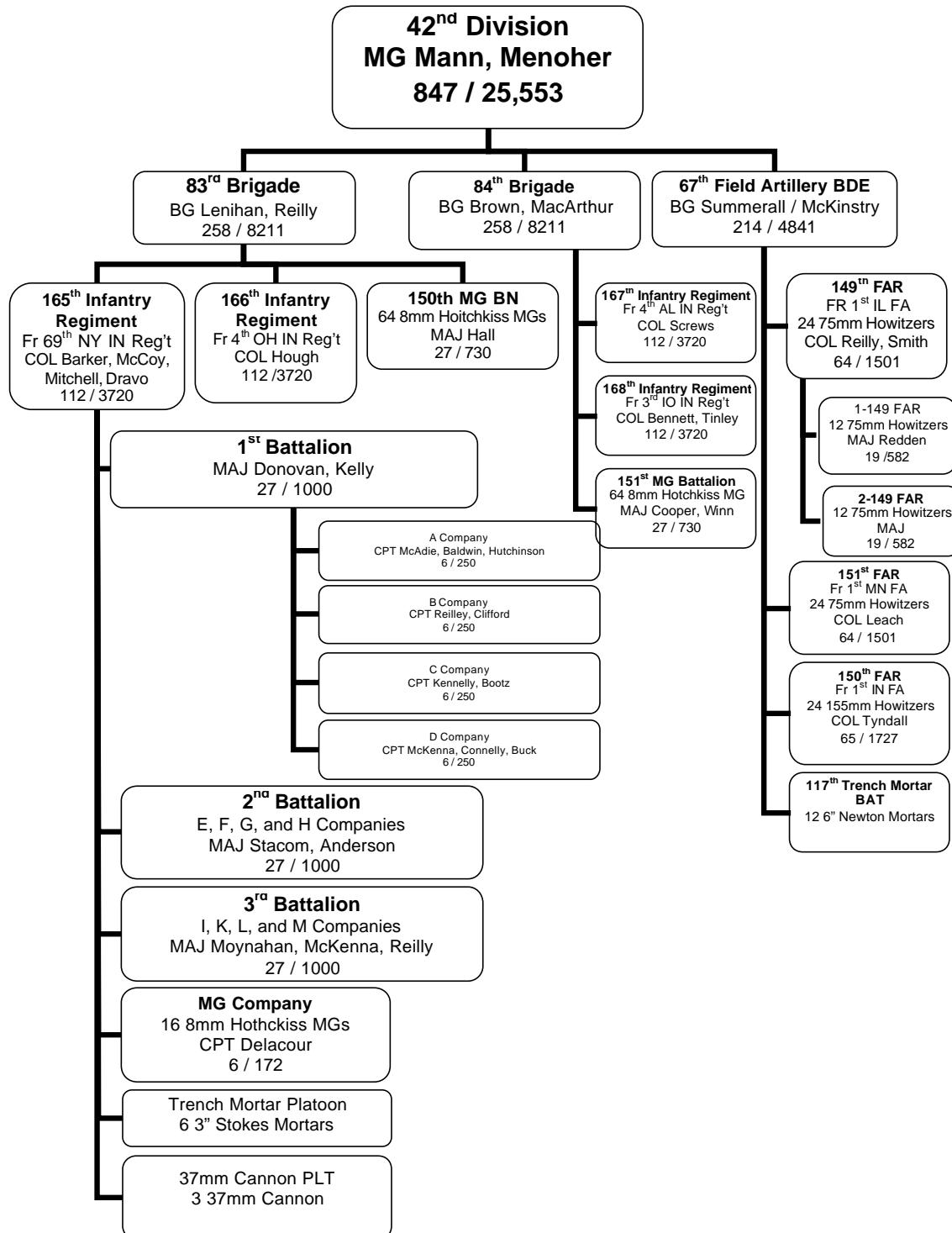
Tactical effectiveness. The subjective evaluation of a unit's ability to integrate all of the combined arms into a coherent system, conduct fire and maneuver, use surprise, and rapidly exploit opportunities. An army's tactical effectiveness is built upon the strengths and weaknesses of its organization, weapon systems, communication techniques, and doctrine. Within an army, each organization's cohesion, leadership, and doctrinal proficiency determine its ability to exploit the limits of its nation's tactical prowess.

Trench warfare. The concept that emphasized the integration of the latest weaponry, the use of meticulously detailed plans, the maximization of firepower, and the methodical attack of specific enemy units and objectives to achieve modest operational results. The British and French Armies embraced this doctrine in the later years of the war.

Unit cohesion. The controlled, interactive forces that create solidarity within military units and direct soldiers towards a common goal. The forces that create cohesion include morale, esprit de corps, motivation, shared goals, teamwork, and group pride.

APPENDIX A

42nd DIVISION TABLE OF ORGANIZATION

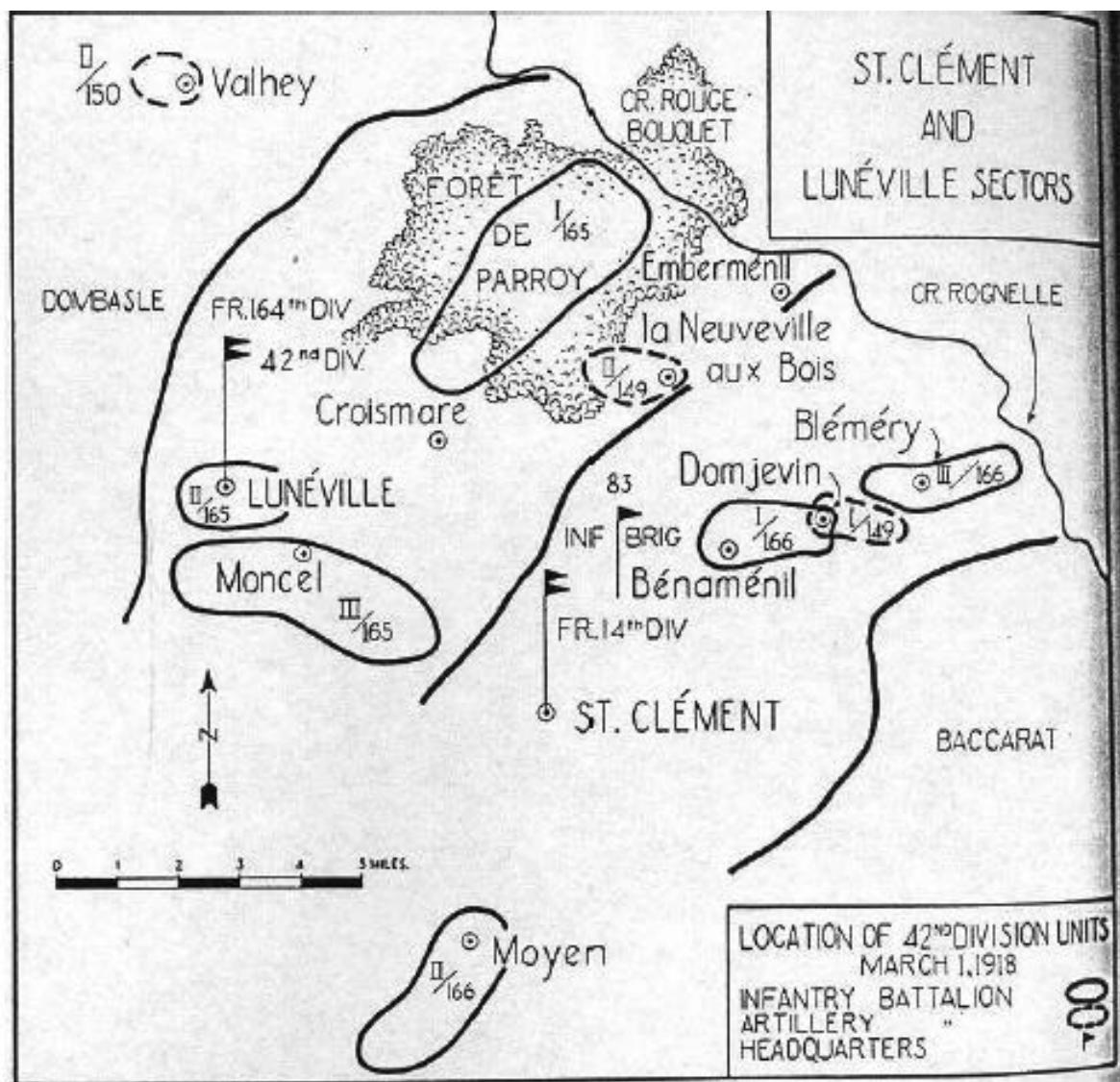


APPENDIX B
CHRONOLOGY AND CASUALTIES

DATES	LOCATION	NOTES	STR	KIA	WIA	DOW
21 FEB–21 MAR 18	Luneville Sector	OTJ Training w/ French HQ – VII Corps (French)				
31 MAR–21 JUN 18	Ancerville	Occupy Baccarat Sector HQ – VII/VI Corps (French)				
22 JUN–3 JUL 18	Champagne Region	Refit and “Special Training”				
30 JUN 18		Strength	3223			
3-14 JUL 18	Esperance-Souain Sector Defense	Occupy Second Position HQ – XXI Corps (French)		0	7	1
15-20 JUL 18	Champagne-Marne Defense	Defend St. Hilaire		47	212	10
21-24 JUL 18	Epieds/Verdilly	Refit			3	1
25 JUL–6 AUG 18	Aisne-Marne Offensive	Crossing the Ourcq River HQ – I Corps (US)		257	1033	64
31 JUL 18		Strength	2073			
6-10 AUG 18	Foret de Fere	Reserve				
16-18 AUG 18	Bourment Training Area	Refit/Training				
19 AUG–4 SEP 18	Neufchateau Training Area	Training				
31 AUG 18		Strength	3143			
12-16 SEP 18	Saint-Mihiel Offensive	Seize Essay and Pannes HQ – IV Corps (US)		35	127	12
17 SEP–4 OCT 18	Essay-Pannes Sector			5	40	4
30 SEP 18		Strength	3564			
5-11 OCT 18	Bois de Montfaucon	Reserve		5	24	4
12-19 OCT 18	Meuse-Argonne	St. Georges Assault HQ – V Corps		180	819	57
20 OCT–1 NOV 18	Meuse-Argonne			15	96	9
31 OCT 18		Strength	1908			
2-11 NOV 18	Meuse-Argonne	Race to Sedan		14	90	8
30 NOV 18		Strength	2315			
Totals				558	2451	170

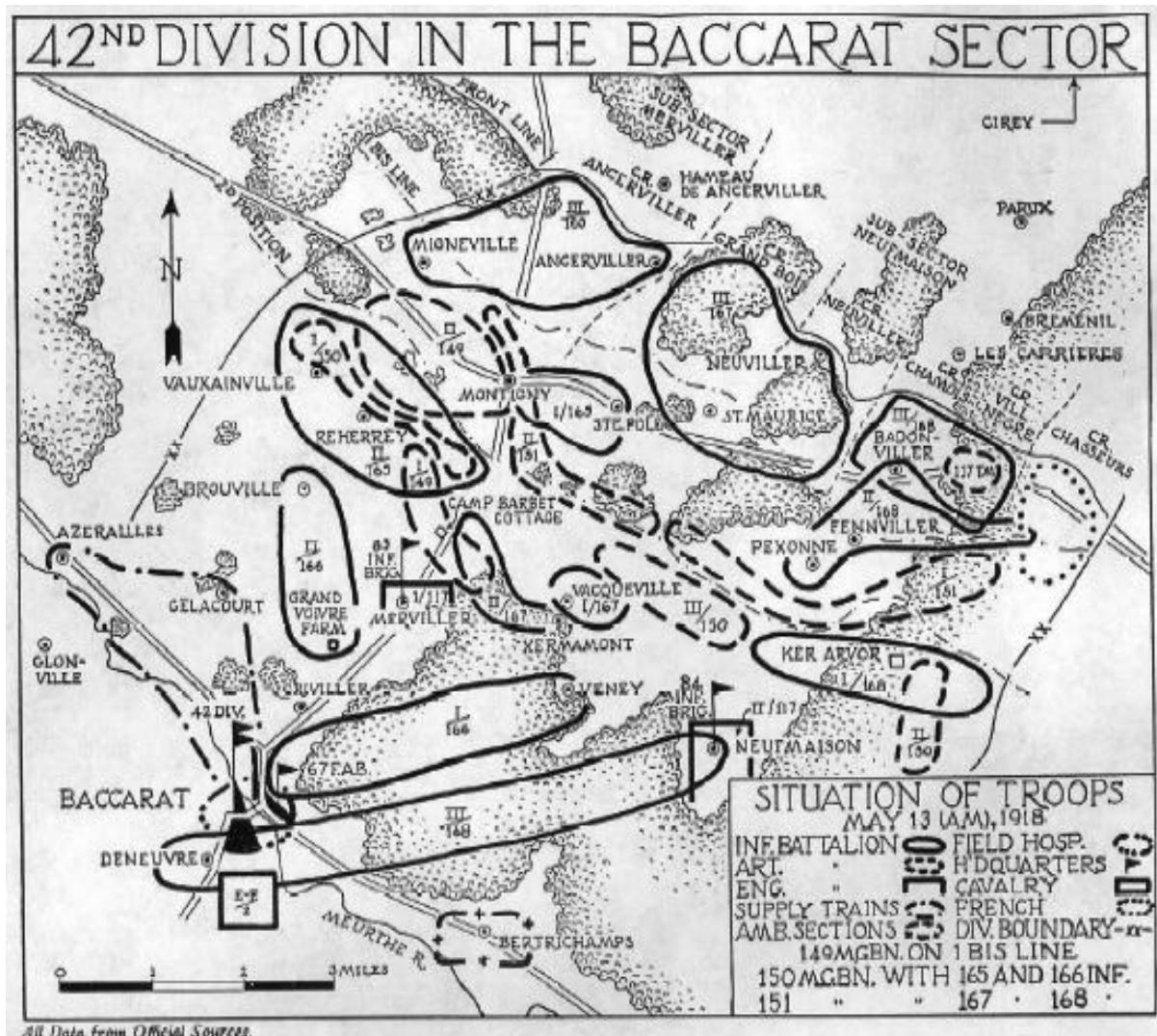
APPENDIX C

MAP OF LUNEVILLE



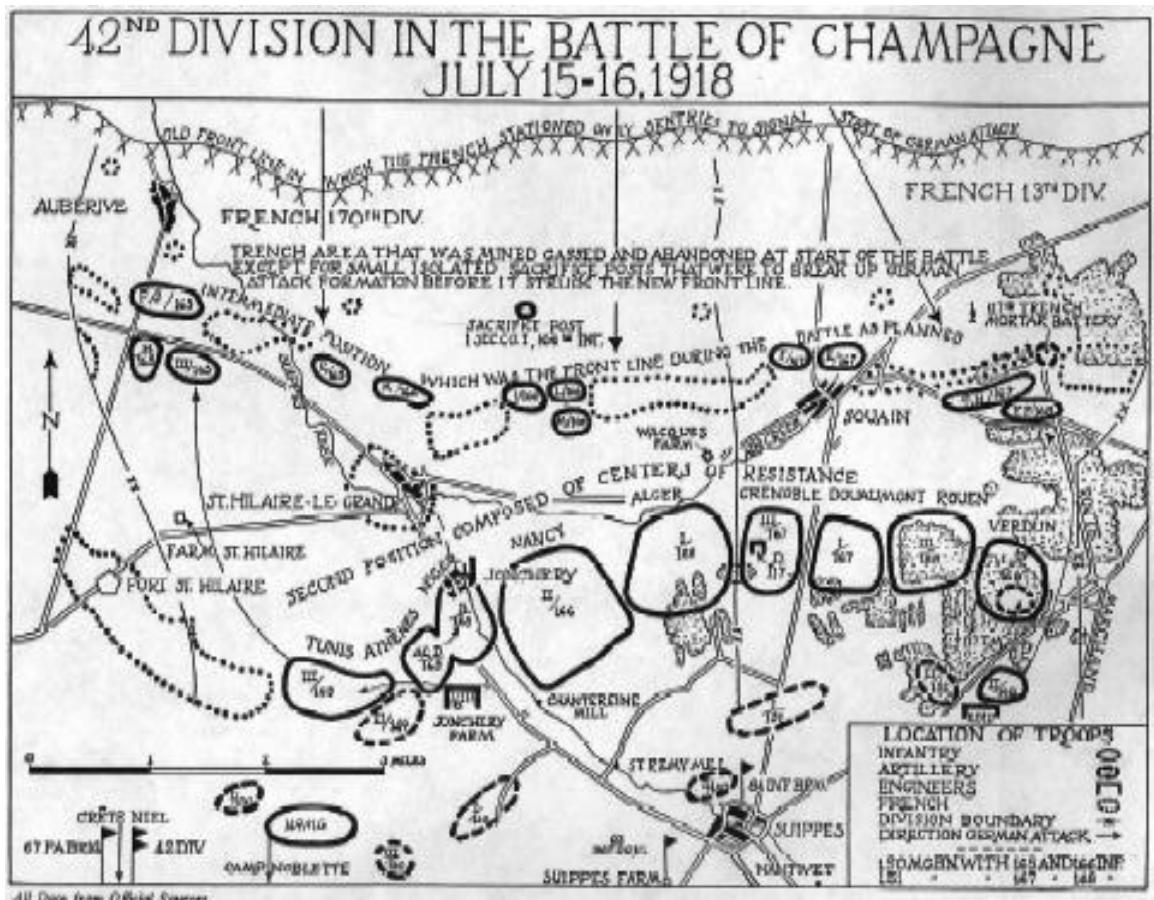
The Irish defensive sector at Luneville, France, 21 February - 21 March 1918. Reprinted, by permission, from Henry J. Reilly, *Americans All: The Rainbow at War* (Columbus, OH: F. J. Heer Printing Company, 1936), 180.

APPENDIX D
MAP OF ANCERVILLE



The 165th Infantry Regiment's defensive sector at Ancerville, France, 31 March - 21 June 1918. Reprinted, by permission, from Henry J. Reilly, *Americans All: The Rainbow at War* (Columbus, OH: F. J. Heer Printing Company, 1936), 228.

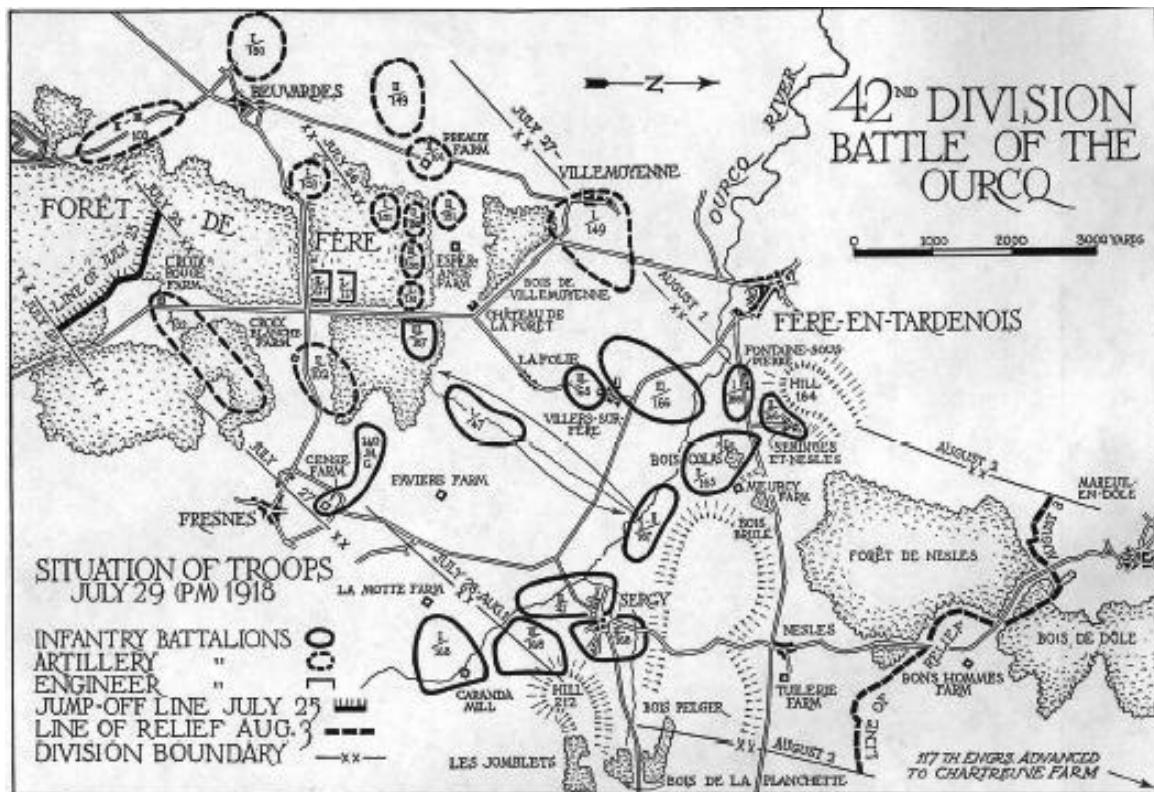
APPENDIX E
MAP OF THE CHAMPAGNE DEFENSE



The Irish defensive sector at St. Hilaire, France, 15-20 July 1918. Note the sacrifice posts and the intermediate position where 2nd and 3rd Battalions held the line against seven attacks by German infantry. Reprinted, by permission, from Henry J. Reilly, *Americans All: The Rainbow at War* (Columbus, OH: F. J. Heer Printing Company, 1936), 304.

APPENDIX F

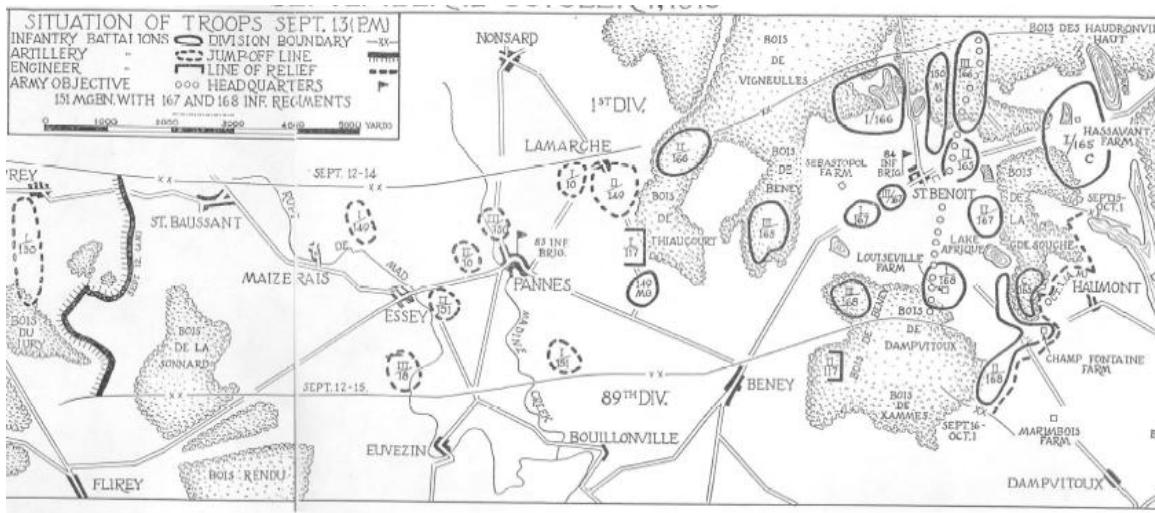
MAP OF THE OURCQ



The 165th's attack across the Ourcq River, near Seringes-et-Nesles, France, 25 July - 6 August 1918. Reprinted, by permission, from Henry J. Reilly, *Americans All: The Rainbow at War* (Columbus, OH: F. J. Heer Printing Company, 1936), 494.

APPENDIX G

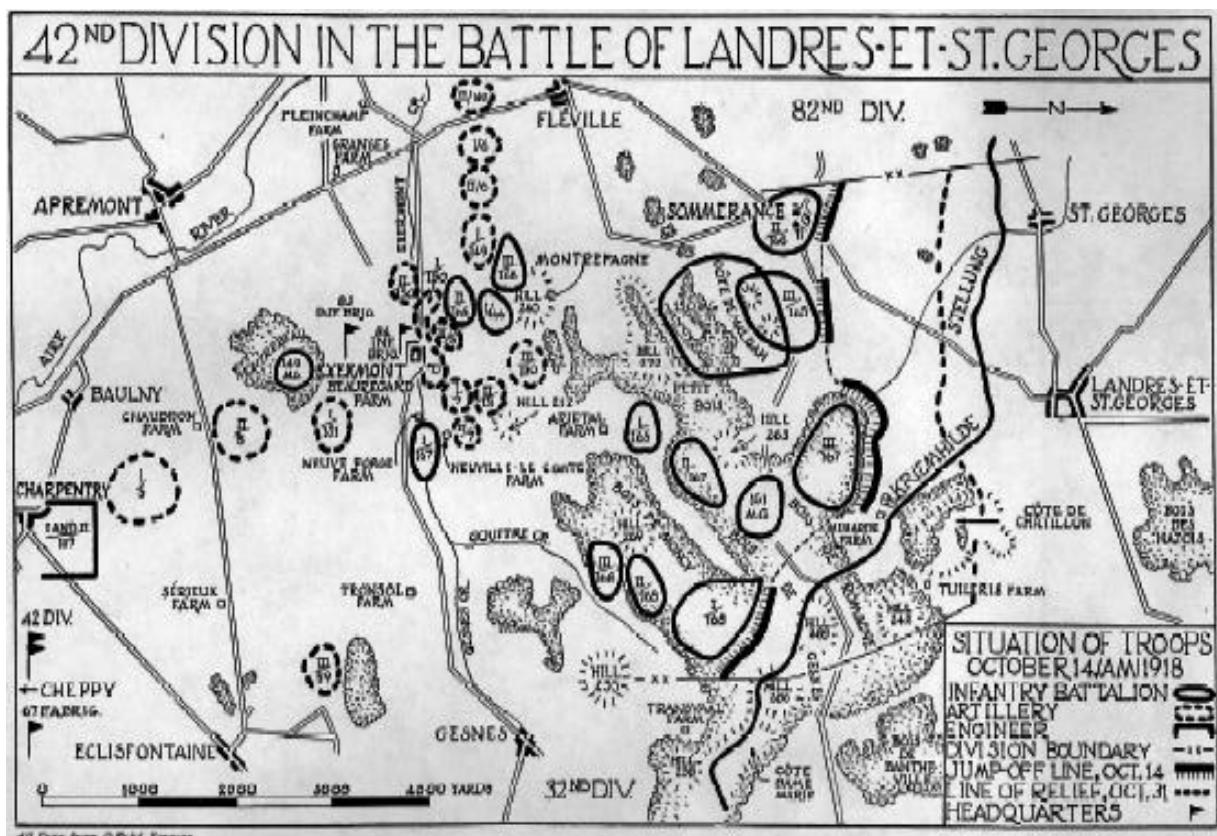
MAP OF ST. MIHIEL



The 165th Infantry Regiment's axis of advance--Mazerais to Essey to Pannes to Bois de Thiacourt to Bois de Benney to St. Benoit--during the St. Mihiel offensive, 12-16 September 1918. Reprinted, by permission, from Henry J. Reilly, *Americans All: The Rainbow at War* (Columbus, OH: F. J. Heer Printing Company, 1936), 596.

APPENDIX H

MAP OF ST. GEORGES



The Irish sector at St. Georges, France, 12-19 October 1918. Note the limit of advance.

Reprinted, by permission, from Henry J. Reilly, *Americans All: The Rainbow at War* (Columbus, OH: F. J. Heer Printing Company, 1936), 773.

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